





Exeg. 357<sup>m</sup>

Faussett.



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# SACRED CHRONOLOGY.

BY THE LATE

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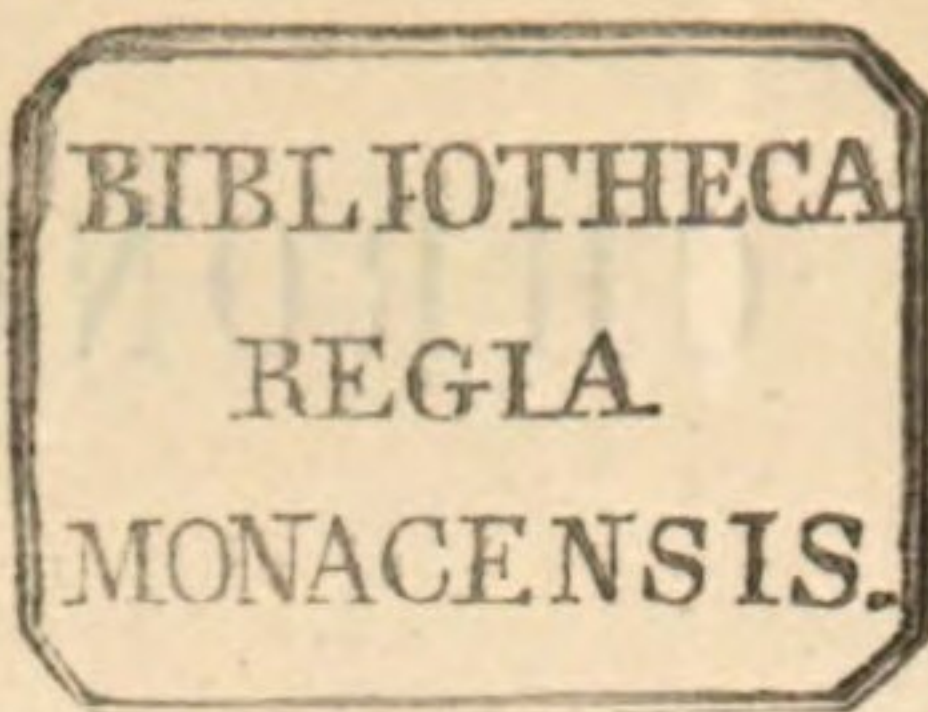
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## P R E F A C E.

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IN bringing the following pages before the public, I am fulfilling the last injunctions of my late Father. The want of a really satisfactory adjustment of dates to the Scripture narrative has, I believe, been long and universally acknowledged, and has even by many been deemed irremediable from the great difficulties that beset the attempt. Evidences of the great importance which the Author attached to the undertaking will be found throughout the work, but I would especially call the attention of his readers to pages 38, 39, 56, 80, 110, 111, 120, 133, 204, as more particularly illustrative of his views and the principles upon which he has based his scheme. Of the soundness of those views, and the consistency of their results his readers



will judge for themselves; but I trust it may not be presumptuous in his son and editor to express the hope, that, in the author's own words, "all further dispute" on the points he has laboured to establish "may at once" and for ever be set at rest."

I will not however attempt to conceal from the reader that the work as now brought before the public is far from being in as finished a condition as it would have been had the Author's life been spared to complete it himself. From obvious motives my object has been simply to collect and arrange the manuscript notes left to my charge into as perfect a form as I was able, at the same time leaving the words themselves with but few exceptions exactly as I found them. This must be my apology for any apparent abruptness or irregularity in the composition: defects, which I trust may prove no real drawback to the intrinsic merits of the work, and in spite of which I feel confident that the indulgent reader will find a clear and intelligible chain of argument throughout.



The three chapters on the Sabbatical years, the Jubilees, and the reigns of the kings respectively, I have placed last in order without regard to chronological succession. The two former, because they are in fact tests of much that has gone before; and the latter, partly because it is in some measure dependent on the other two, and partly because it lays no claim for itself to positive demonstration, and would only interrupt the main thread of the argument if introduced in its natural place. The few words on the dates of St. Paul's Epistles were evidently intended as a supplement to the Chapter on the Acts of the Apostles, but I regret to say that they are in so unfinished a state, that I long hesitated as to the propriety of publishing them at all. I have persuaded myself however that, imperfect as they are, they are yet not valueless: since they would not only appear to indicate that the author himself saw no difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory arrangement, but may also perhaps afford some suggestions to others who are disposed to carry out the design.



From the position which my late Father occupied in this University it was naturally my wish that this work should be printed at the University Press. This privilege has been liberally accorded to me by the Delegates. And I gladly avail myself of this opportunity of expressing my deep sense of obligation to them.

R. F.

CH. CH. Feb. 5.



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## CHAPTER I.

### ON THE HEBREW AND SEPTUAGINT COMPUTATIONS OF THE PATRIARCHAL GENEALOGIES.

---

THE first point to be attended to is the adoption of a satisfactory choice between the conflicting claims of the Masoretic Hebrew and the Septuagint Greek texts, to guide our calculation of the Patriarchal Genealogies. So conflicting indeed are these authorities as to make a difference of about six Centuries before the Deluge, and seven or eight Centuries (and by some various readings even more) between the Deluge and the birth of Abraham.

The case will be best understood by placing their respective numbers in parallel columns; and the judgment will perhaps be assisted by adding the Samaritan scheme also, from its obvious relation to both the others; though it will be presently seen that its claim to originality



and therefore to competing authority cannot be substantiated.

|                 | Hebrew. |      |       | Septuagint.      |                |       | Samaritan. |      |       |
|-----------------|---------|------|-------|------------------|----------------|-------|------------|------|-------|
|                 | Gen.    | Res. | Life. | Gen.             | Res.           | Life. | Gen.       | Res. | Life. |
| Adam.....       | 130     | 800  | 930   | 230              | 700            | 930   | 130        | 800  | 930   |
| Seth.....       | 105     | 807  | 912   | 205              | 707            | 912   | 105        | 807  | 912   |
| Enos.....       | 90      | 815  | 905   | 190              | 715            | 905   | 90         | 815  | 905   |
| Cainan.....     | 70      | 840  | 910   | 170              | 740            | 910   | 70         | 840  | 910   |
| Mahalaleel..... | 65      | 830  | 895   | 165              | 730            | 895   | 65         | 830  | 895   |
| Jared.....      | 162     | 800  | 962   | 162              | 800            | 962   | 62         | 785  | 847   |
| Enoch.....      | 65      | 300  | 365   | 165              | 200            | 365   | 65         | 300  | 365   |
| Methuselah....  | 187     | 782  | 969   | { 167<br>187 }   | { 802<br>782 } | 969   | 67         | 653  | 720   |
| Lamech.....     | 182     | 595  | 777   | 188              | 565            | 753   | 53         | 600  | 653   |
| Noah to Deluge  | 600     | 350  | 950   | 600              |                |       | 600        |      |       |
| Sum.....        | 1656    |      |       | { 2242<br>2262 } |                |       | 1307       |      |       |

|                          | Hebrew. |      | Septuagint.   |                | Samaritan. |      |       |
|--------------------------|---------|------|---------------|----------------|------------|------|-------|
|                          | Gen.    | Res. | Gen.          | Res.           | Gen.       | Res. | Life. |
| Shem after the Deluge.   | 2       | 500  | 2             | 500            | 2          | 500  | 600   |
| Arphaxad .....           | 35      | 403  | 135           | 400            | 135        | 303  | 438   |
| (Cainan) .....           | —       | —    | (130          | 330)           | —          | —    | —     |
| Salah.....               | 30      | 403  | 130           | 330            | 130        | 303  | 433   |
| Eber.....                | 34      | 430  | 134           | 270            | 134        | 270  | 404   |
| Peleg.....               | 30      | 209  | 130           | 209            | 130        | 109  | 239   |
| Reu.....                 | 32      | 207  | 132           | 207            | 132        | 107  | 239   |
| Serug.....               | 30      | 200  | 130           | 200            | 130        | 100  | 230   |
| Nahor.....               | 29      | 119  | { 79<br>179 } | { 125<br>125 } | 79         | 69   | 148   |
| Terah.....               | 70      | 135  | 70            | 135            | 70         | 75   | 145   |
| Sum.....                 | 292     |      | 942           |                | 940        |      |       |
| With Cainan .....        |         |      | 1072          |                |            |      |       |
| With Nahor's addition... |         |      | 1042          |                |            |      |       |
| With both .....          |         |      | 1172          |                |            |      |       |

We must be immediately struck by one obvious advantage possessed by the Hebrew Scheme, its freedom from various readings,—in comparison with the doubts and embarrassment attendant



on three very formidable ones in its rival. This however ought by no means to be regarded as decisive of the question; and the more especially so, since these, and perhaps one or two other variations of lesser note, may with great probability be traced to the anxiety of the early Christians to adapt their Sacred Chronology to the Millenary traditions with regard to the duration of the world and the advent of the Messiah, which prevailed in their days, and to which I shall have occasion to refer. The question therefore will fairly lie between the Hebrew numbers as they are, and the Septuagint numbers carefully cleared (should it be found practicable), from the confusion in which error or contrivance, or both, have partially involved them.

The broad lines of distinction however between the two schemes are of such a nature as to afford much scope for comparison and judgment, independently of minor variations. The main difference indeed consists in the addition or subtraction of a whole century, in the years respectively assigned to most of the Patriarchs before the birth of their sons; and that this was done by design and not by accident, is perfectly clear in the Antediluvian period, from the pains taken to preserve the balance between the years before and after those births, so as to leave the totals of the lives still the same. A glance at the accompanying table will shew this at once. Careful design then being obvious in one party or the



other, where shall we most naturally look for the probable inducement to make so important an alteration in the text of Holy Scripture? Not surely in the native Jews of Palestine, whose reverence for every letter of their Sacred Books was notoriously strict, almost to superstition; and in proof of whose veneration for them, Josephus who knew them well could testify, that “notwithstanding the lapse of so many ages, no one had ever dared to add to or take from them or alter any thing in them, but that it was innate in every Jew to regard them as the precepts of God, to abide by them, and if need be, cheerfully to die for them\*.” Very different however was the case, if not of the actual translators of the Scriptures into Greek, at least of the early copyists of the translation, influenced as they must have been by their intercourse with the Egyptians, whose historian Manetho, as well as their current traditions, laid claim to a remote antiquity, such as was calculated to cast contempt on the comparatively few centuries, through which the Hebrew Pentateuch traced back the origin of nations.

Again, whenever an important innovation of this kind is contemplated, one of the first cares

\* Josephus, contr. Apion. I. 8. Τοσούτου γὰρ αἰῶνος ἤδη παρωχηκότος, οὔτε προσθεῖναι τις οὔτε ἀφελεῖν αὐτῶν, οὔτε μεταθεῖναι τετόλμηκεν. πᾶσι δὲ σύμφυτόν ἐστιν εὐθὺς ἐκ τῆς πρώτης γενέσεως Ἰουδαίοις, τὸ νομίζειν αὐτὰ Θεοῦ δόγματα, καὶ τούτοις ἐμμένειν, καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν εἰ δέοι θνήσκειν ἡδέως.



of the projector will always be, to set off his new scheme to the best advantage, by avoiding whatever may seem *prima facie* improbable or abrupt; so that even this very regularity, if over studied, is often sufficient to draw on it the suspicion of contrivance. Now in the period before the Flood, supposing the Greek editors the authors of the change, they have at all events thrown in the centenary additions, where they could be most easily admitted, and have at once gained six centuries for their chronology, and a more plausible regularity for their scheme. But suppose, on the other hand, the Jews engaged in reducing the Septuagint numbers, their most obvious course would have been to have adopted, like the Samaritan plan, a reduction of nine centuries at once. Supposing however that, for some reason unknown to us, a reduction of only six centuries was most in accordance with their views, their selection of cases would assuredly have been different: they would never have gratuitously increased the abrupt disproportion of the remainder, by leaving the generations of Mahalaleel and Enoch at 65, instead of those of Methuselah and Lamech at 87 and 88. Thus in the Antediluvian period the absence of care and contrivance makes plainly in favour of the Hebrew numbers.

If we proceed to the period after the Flood, the centenary additions or subtractions may appear to place the question of innovation nearly on a par between the two computations; unless



perhaps it may be thought somewhat unlikely that the Jews should have ventured on so bold a reduction as to leave so many successive generations averaging little more than 30 years, for which the Antediluvian times offered no precedent or encouragement, and that therefore it should seem more probable that they found them such as we see, rather than left them so. But passing this, I consider that there is another point, in which, on the hypothesis of innovation by the Septuagint copyists, the traces of art and contrivance are particularly observable. Although the sums of the several lives are no longer expressly stated, they are of course easily reckoned, and by the Hebrew scheme they now display considerable irregularity, especially in the abrupt reduction of life by about one half in Peleg and his posterity, and in the early death of Nahor. Now the Greek editors, apparently struck by these plausible objections, set themselves to remedy them in the following manner:—Referring to the table as before, we find that Arphaxad and Salah each lived by the Hebrew computation 403 years after the birth of their sons, and consistently with the balancing system adopted in the Antediluvian scheme, their residues should have both stood in the Septuagint at 303 years;—but in order, as it should seem, to avoid an abrupt declension from the years of Shem, they are stated as 400 and 330. Eber lived by the Hebrew computation 430 years after the birth of Peleg; but



now in order to escape the abruptness of the approaching decline in the standard of life, a bolder reduction is called for, and his residue is fixed at 270. Peleg, Reu and Serug, according to the Hebrew, survive the birth of their sons 209, 207 and 200 years respectively; but here the term of life has already declined so suddenly that any reduction of these residues can no longer be afforded, and they are accordingly left unaltered. Nahor's case is found to require peculiar care; 50 years instead of 100 are added to his generation, and his residue is even raised; viz. from 119 to 125. Finally, Terah's years remain untouched. The effect of this careful management will be most readily seen by placing the ages, at which the Patriarchs died by the Hebrew and Septuagint computations respectively, in parallel columns, thus:—

|              | Heb. | Sept. |
|--------------|------|-------|
| Shem . . .   | 600  | 600   |
| Arphaxad     | 438  | 565   |
| Salah . . .  | 433  | 460   |
| Eber . . . . | 464  | 404   |
| Peleg . . .  | 239  | 339   |
| Reu. . . . . | 239  | 339   |
| Serug . . .  | 230  | 330   |
| Nahor. . .   | 148  | 204   |
| Terah . . .  | 205  | 205   |

The chief points, on the present hypothesis, thus gained by the wisdom of the Greeks, are, that Arphaxad does not decline too abruptly from his father's standard; that Eber's disproportionate longevity is reasonably put down;—the next three generations as fairly put up;—that Nahor is allowed to survive his father, and reach about the same age as his son;—and that altogether a gradual and probable declension in the standard of human life is ex-



hibited, rather than one which is abrupt and improbable.

To make this comparison the clearer, and the inference to be derived from it the more inevitable, we have only to try it on the opposite hypothesis, assuming the truth of the Septuagint numbers, and the Jews as engaged in reducing them to the present Hebrew scale. How would they have proceeded in their work? The centenary deductions would have been obvious enough, supposing them undeterred by the slight objection before suggested,—but having arranged these and secured the reduced chronology, what possible motive could they have had to interfere with the residues and lives which did not affect the chronological question at all? Would they have perversely broken up the existing regularity of their declining duration? Would they have gone out of their way to produce the striking difference between Shem and Arphaxad? Would the sudden abridgment of human life by one half in the days of Peleg even have occurred to them, or would they have adopted it if it had? Would they have capriciously invented the unprecedented case of Nahor's early death? We may well account ourselves morally certain that they would not. Conscious innovation, one might rather say conscious forgery, would have been far too timid to venture on any such questionable, and at the same time, be it observed, wholly



gratuitous experiments. Thus far then the manifest tokens of art and contrivance in the one scheme, and of their absence in the other, must be admitted to incline the balance strongly in favour of the truth and originality of the Hebrew Genealogies.

A brief reference to the Samaritan calculation may assist in illustrating these observations, and at the same time shew its own utter defect of original authority. In fact its contriver was obviously well acquainted with the Hebrew and Septuagint schemes, and exercised his ingenuity in combining what he deemed the preferable features of each. We shall find on referring to the tables that he adopts the higher numbers of the Septuagint for the Postdiluvian generations, but avoiding its over-nicely graduated scale of lives, contents himself for the most part with exactly copying those of the Hebrew, the chief exception being the disproportioned redundancy of Eber, which he reduces to the Septuagint amount, and completes his scheme by giving a statement of the sums of the successive lives, which the other two omit. In the Antediluvian period he prefers the general removal of a century from each of the Septuagint generations, not even sparing those which the Hebrew assigns to Jared, Methuselah and Lamech. But he is here betrayed into an expedient much more likely to offend the judgment than the irregularity which would have arisen from the reten-



tion of the three centuries; as, these patriarchs being thus found to outlive the Deluge, he reduces their residues and lives till they are all made to die in the very year of its occurrence. The traces of Septuagint guidance are besides plainly discernible in the 67 years assigned to the generation of Methuselah, derived of course from the 167 of the Greek, a number which appears to be recognised by the majority of copies, and to that extent involves the Septuagint in the absurdity of making Methuselah survive the Flood 14 years.

But after all, if we attentively regard these cases of *prima facie* irregularity or improbability in the Hebrew numbers, to which the Septuagint version has been by many supposed to supply the required remedy,—is there really any thing in them at all inadmissible, or even improbable on competent, much more on inspired, authority? Considering the notorious uncertainty of the duration of life in individual instances, what hesitation need there be in admitting the premature death of Nahor? And when we call to mind the sudden reduction of human life by one half at the period of the Deluge, why should it be incredible that the Almighty should have been pleased to ordain a second reduction in the same proportion and as suddenly in the days of Peleg? And as to the great and abrupt disproportion which the Hebrew exhibits between the generations of the different Patriarchs, we have only to



discard the fanciful and unwarranted, though apparently prevailing notion, that the line of succession was generally transmitted by primogeniture, to enable us to perceive that the balance of probability in this particular also inclines greatly to the Hebrew scheme. In truth we have no authority whatever for supposing that the Patriarchs forming the line of descent from Adam to Abraham were all, or even most of them, the eldest sons of their fathers. Seth, we are sure, was not so; neither were Shem nor Abraham; nay, we are not even enabled to assert of any one that he was. Adam appears to have had numerous descendants before the birth of Seth;—Cain, at least, expresses his fear of them, as such\*; and the Patriarchs in general may have had a great many sons before and after those whose births are recorded and dated to mark the chosen line of succession, and no doubt also to fix with due precision the early Chronology of the World; but assuredly not to indicate the age of marriage. In fact, that the periods of these births should vary even by several centuries, is an irregularity naturally to be expected, where a single thread of descent is to be traced, without regard to primogeniture, and through parents endued with the primeval longevity and vigour. To infer therefore a greater probability of truth in the account which assigns these births almost invariably to the second century of the Patri-

\* Gen. iv. 14.



archs' lives, evinces a very unreflecting and hasty judgment as to what in such a case is really probable. Should any *prima facie* improbability be considered to attach to six or seven successive generations in the Hebrew scheme approximating so closely to 30 years, it deserves to be recollected that the alternative offered by the Septuagint is a similar approximation of the same generations to 130 years, whereby the approximation to identity, and so far to improbability, is increased in the ratio of at least four to one.

Again, it has been considered an objection to the truth of these early births that they are inconsistent with what is recorded of the immediately succeeding generations; Terah's first son being born when he was 70; Abraham's when he was 86; Isaac's when he was 60; Jacob's when he was about 85. It should be borne in mind however that this chosen race was reserved for the sojourn in Egypt at a preordained period; and that, had not a special Providence restrained for a time the natural tendency to increase, they would have become utterly inadmissible as peaceful settlers. In the meanwhile Ishmael's descendants appear to have become a people by the time that Joseph is sold to them; and no sooner is the reason for this restraint on the point of ceasing, than the Hebrews rapidly multiply by early marriages\*. Benjamin at the age of about 25 or 26 goes into Egypt with ten sons†;

\* Gen. xlv. 21.

† Ibid. 17.



Asher, aged about 40, with two grandsons, the children, it should seem, of his fourth son; and Hezron the son of Pharez and grandson of Judah, who is numbered among the original sojourners, must have been born when his father's age, considering the peculiar circumstances of his birth, could scarcely have exceeded 14\*. Thus far then I think we may fairly maintain that the balance of internal evidence still inclines towards the Hebrew numbers.

But again, it has been confidently maintained by some that the early births of the Hebrew computation are even repugnant to the established course of nature, which requires that the age of puberty should bear a regular proportion to the ordinary length of life. Among the more modern advocates of the longer Chronology, Hales strongly maintains this principle, and asserts that "it was  
" not probable that the age of puberty among  
" the Antediluvians, who lived to 900 years and  
" upwards, began sooner than 160 or 170 years,  
" corresponding to 14 or 15 years at present; but  
" that this standard, founded in nature, and veri-  
" fied by experience in all ages of the world, is  
" violated by the shorter Hebrew computation;  
" and that to suppose, for instance, that Cainan,  
" Mahalaleel and Enoch begat children between  
" 60 and 70, is to the full as preposterous as to  
" suppose the same of children now between 6  
" and 7 years†." But this theory is not merely

\* Gen. xxxviii.

† Hales' Chronology, vol. i. pp. 285, 286.



a bare assumption, obviously unsupported by experience, but is even open to satisfactory confutation from Scripture itself. We have just now had occasion to notice the indications of puberty at as early an age as about 14 or 15, shortly before the commencement of the Egyptian sojourn. At about the corresponding period, Jacob reached the age of 147, Levi of 137, Kohath of 133 ;—so that with the age of puberty as early as it is at present, we find the average duration of life about doubling our own standard. The argument therefore in favour of the Septuagint computation, founded on the regular proportion between the age of puberty, and the average length of life, completely fails, and we are thus far left as before, undisturbed in our persuasion of the correctness of the Hebrew account of the Patriarchal generations. It seems indeed scarcely probable that the advocates of this theory can have well considered the strange consequences which it necessarily involves. The same rule of proportion which fixes the age of puberty must of course regulate the preparatory stages of infancy and childhood and youth ; and a man born under such a law must have been at least 10 years old before he could walk ; 20 or 30 before he could speak articulately ; 50 or 60 before he could dispense with the close attendance of his nurse ;—and have required a full century more for the lingering development of his proper energies both of mind and body ;—a condition of being, which,



considered as coexisting with the Divine command, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth\*," must appear to all our natural apprehensions so utterly inconsistent, as to be strictly incredible, unless on the surest warrant of inspired Scripture ;—to assert which in the present case would be in fact to assume the very question at issue.

But again, it has been argued that the shorter Hebrew computation is inconsistent with the records of History,—for that we discover as early as the times of Abraham the evidences of a large population throughout the then known world. Those who use this argument are apt to assume that Abraham was born but 292 years after the Flood, and even Hales† hastily adopts this supposition, though he had previously commended Ussher for having clearly shewn that he was born when Terah was not 70 years old, but 130 ; which makes a difference of 60 years in the account. Besides, it is not till about the time of the Call of Abraham, that these indications of population are to be noticed in Scripture. This adds 75 years more to the calculation, and gives a space of 427 years from the Deluge. The argument in question however can only have been taken up through inattention to the plain results of statistical science, and to the rate of increase of which mankind is notoriously capable in newly-peopled countries and under favourable

\* Gen. ix. 1.

† Hales' Chronology, vol. i. p. 286.



circumstances. It is perfectly ascertained that a given population with the means of subsistence abundantly supplied may continue to double its numbers in about 15 years, and in some favoured cases even in less time\*. Indeed the Israelites in the land of Goshen increased from about 70 to more than two millions in 215 years, notwithstanding a temporary check; thus making the period of doubling about 14 years.

If it be objected that the age of puberty immediately after the Deluge was considerably later than at present, let it be remembered, that, even if the earliest recorded births in the line of Patriarchal succession, which took place at about the age of 30, were the earliest that actually occurred for several generations, for which assumption, be it observed, we have no warrant whatever, such a delay was more than compensated by the two or three centuries of continued vigour and fruitfulness which were then accorded to the human race; so that a rate of increase quite equal to what is attainable at the present day may very fairly be attributed to the immediate posterity of Noah and his sons. What this may have amounted to at a much earlier period than has been so inconsiderately imagined, will appear from the following simple calculation. I adopt *ten* as its basis, not merely for the sake of the perspicuity attendant on the round number, but because it virtually represents the state

\* Malthus, vol. i. ch. i; vol. ii. ch. xiii: 5th edition.



of the case far better than the strict number *eight*, which included *six* persons in the prime of life, and no children; which last however were of course almost immediately supplied.

| Years after Flood. | Population. |                         | Years after Flood. | Population.   |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 15                 | 20          |                         | 255                | 1,310,720     |
| 30                 | 40          |                         | 270                | 2,621,440     |
| 45                 | 80          |                         | 285                | 5,242,880     |
| 60                 | 160         |                         | 300                | 10,485,760    |
| 75                 | 320         |                         | 315                | 20,971,520    |
| 90                 | 640         |                         | 330                | 41,943,040    |
| 105                | 1,280       |                         | 345                | 83,886,080    |
| 120                | 2,560       | Birth of Abraham        | 360                | 167,772,160   |
| 135                | 5,120       |                         | 375                | 335,544,320   |
| 150                | 10,240      |                         | 390                | 671,088,640   |
| 165                | 20,480      | Birth of Peleg by Sept. | 405                | 1,342,177,280 |
| 180                | 40,960      |                         | 420                | 2,684,354,560 |
| 195                | 81,920      | Call of Abraham         | 435                | 5,368,709,120 |
| 210                | 163,840     |                         |                    |               |
| 225                | 327,680     |                         |                    |               |
| 240                | 655,360     |                         |                    |               |

It will be seen that I have inserted notices of the Birth and the Call of Abraham at their proper places in the table according to the Hebrew numbers;—and though it need not be supposed that the natural tendency to increase received no check during these four centuries, yet it will at all events be conceded that it received none before the dispersion at Babel; and that it must have continued still unimpeded for a time at least in the more fertile of those regions, to which the Providence of God conducted the scattered tribes of mankind;—so that it must be evident enough that, so far from the population observable in the days of Abraham being more than the Hebrew Chronology can account for, it is rather such as might furnish an argument



even on the contrary side, that is, against the presumed lapse of so much as 400 years since the Deluge. For if we except Egypt, where the fruitful valley of the Nile seems very early to have invited settlers and fostered the growth of a powerful nation, we discover no traces of a dense population in the other countries, which the wanderings of the Hebrew patriarchs bring under our notice. The Mesopotamian and Elamite invaders, whom Abraham with 300 followers was able to discomfit after their successes in the Vale of Siddim, cannot be supposed to have mustered many thousands. When the flocks and herds of Abraham and Lot in the land of Canaan had become too numerous to remain together, they found themselves at full liberty to separate\* “to the right or the left,” in a country as yet but partially occupied. And a century and a half later, and in a country still nearer to the original seat of mankind, we find Laban enabled to “set “three days’ journey betwixt himself and Jacob” for the separation of their flocks†.

But perhaps the most convincing argument founded on the amount of population in favour of the Hebrew numbers may be derived from the circumstances recorded of the dispersion of mankind at Babel. Bishop Patrick indeed maintains that this account does not relate to the whole race, but to a rebellious colony which moved westward when Noah and the bulk of his descen-

\* Gen. xiii. 9.

† Gen. xxx. 36.



dants advanced towards the East\*. But assuredly this is not merely a gratuitous fancy, but is plainly opposed to the tenor and even the letter of the Mosaic narrative. “The *whole* earth was “of *one* language, and of *one* speech. And it “came to pass, as *they* journeyed from the East, “that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; “and *they* dwelt there.” And after relating the building of the city and its interruption by the confusion of tongues, it adds, “Therefore is the “name of it called Babel, because the Lord did “*there* confound the language of *all* the earth†.” Moreover their separation was distasteful to them, and required the decree of Providence to enforce it; their desire was to live together in or near one city;—clearly therefore their numbers were not yet such as to have become an inconvenience, or of themselves to have necessitated a separation, as they must have done had they amounted to a great many thousands. I have marked in the table the years after the Flood, and the probable increase of population with which Peleg, in whose days the dispersion was effected, was contemporary; and it will be at once seen how consistently the Hebrew computation admits of this event having occurred in his lifetime, and undoubtedly in the earlier portion of it. But let us try the case on the Septuagint hypothesis. Not to oppress the adverse

\* Bishop Patrick's Commentary on Gen. xi. 2.

† Gen. xi. 9.



argument with the unmerciful weight of the 130 years of the second Cainan, (but admitting their probable interpolation,) let us merely consider the effect of the 300 additional years preceding even the birth of Peleg, which thus stands at 401 years from the Deluge;—taking into the account the recorded longevity and protracted fruitfulness of the earlier generations, which amply compensated for the supposed delay in the period of puberty, and were accorded to them, we need not doubt, for the very purpose of forwarding the renewed occupation of the vacant world;—and then let us imagine if we can, the whole human race in the fifth century after the Flood, still lingering in one collected body in the plain of Shinar.

It must however be admitted on the other hand, as an undoubted fact, that the almost undivided verdict of the early Christian writers was given in favour of the Septuagint Chronology. This however was what under their peculiar circumstances might have been expected;—indeed it could not well have been otherwise. They were almost universally unacquainted with Hebrew; and they had, by the good Providence of God, received their Christianity through the medium of the then prevailing language. The Apostles and Evangelists, themselves writing in Greek, had drawn their citations expressly from the Greek translation of the Scriptures. The



miraculous consent of the LXX Translators, as reported and detailed by Aristeas\*, and received with undoubting reverence by the succeeding generations, had stamped the Septuagint Version with the character of Inspiration. We need not wonder, therefore, that even the interpolated Cainan found an early admission into the text of St. Luke, as an honest correction of the presumed inadvertence of some previous transcriber, and as derived from an authority, which was held to be at least as Divine as that of St. Luke himself. When the superior learning of Origen, and afterwards of Jerome, had pointed out and advocated the shorter computations of the Hebrew Genealogies, little impression was made on the prejudices of their contemporaries, who were merely led to the supposition that the Jews must have corrupted the original numbers. Ephrem Syrus in the fourth century more distinctly laid this to their charge, assigning as a motive, that their own books might not convict them concerning the coming of Christ, who was predicted to appear for the deliverance of mankind after 5500 years†; and Epiphanius‡ attributes the origin of the fraud to Aquila, whose version was made about A. D. 128, and was one of the six which formed Origen's Hexapla. On a few such authorities as these, which amount rather to opinions and assertions than to satisfactory proofs, the

\* Cf. Prideaux's *Connexion*, vol. iii. p. 36—60.

† Cf. Hales' *Chronology*, vol. i. p. 278.

‡ Ibid. p. 276.



more modern advocates of the Septuagint Chronology, such as Jackson\* and Hales, appear in the main to rely.

There is however one argument to which they confidently resort, which, if it were really as well founded in facts as has been frequently supposed, would be altogether unanswerable; I mean the close correspondence of the Chronology of Josephus with that of the Septuagint. For Josephus published his *Antiquities* before the end of the first century, that is, 30 or 40 years before the supposed corruptions of the Hebrew Genealogies could have taken place. Moreover his descent from the most eminent of the priestly families, and his early and extraordinary proficiency in learning, which, though boastfully reported by himself†, cannot be questioned, assure us of his thorough acquaintance with those Sacred Books, from whence he declares that he derives his account‡. To him therefore we naturally turn for satisfactory evidence of the state of the Patriarchal Genealogies as found in his days. At the first glance we certainly discover a series of numbers corresponding in the main with the Septuagint calculation, but on a closer observation we may detect many scattered exceptions derivable only from the Hebrew. This strange intermixture the more requires our special investigation,

\* Jackson, vol. i. p. 52, &c.

† Josephus, *Vita*, i.

‡ Ibid. *Antiq. præem.* sub fin.



as the very basis of the hypothesis in favour of the Septuagint is the non-existence, in the first century after Christ, of any important chronological difference between the two authorities ;—or to speak more precisely, the non-existence in the Hebrew Scriptures of a series of numbers in the Patriarchal Genealogies, at all materially different from those which were then and are still found in the Septuagint translation.

The Chronology of Josephus, in its present state, is a mass of confusion and inconsistency. Indeed after making every allowance for corruptions of his text, both designed and accidental, there remains much reason for supposing that, Chronology being with him but a secondary object, he was not over careful in his calculations, and was even sometimes inconsistent with himself. But though it should thus appear, that it would be unsafe to look to him for the correct outline of a chronological scheme, he may still be an excellent authority for our present purpose, which is rather to discover the source from whence he derived his numbers, than to depend upon his exactness in combining them. We have to examine then those passages in his writings, and they are but few, which bear with more or less distinctness on the question of Scriptural Chronology between the Creation and the birth of Abraham, at which period the system of computing time by the successive births of the Patriarchs, and the great discrepancies between the



Hebrew and Septuagint numbers, are found to terminate.

1. The received text of Josephus states, that from the birth of Adam to the Flood were 2656 years. Then follow the details, which are said to make up this sum, but in reality amount to only 2256\*. I annex the Hebrew and Septuagint Computations, for the purpose of facilitating the necessary comparison :—

|                 | Heb.    | Sept.            | Josephus.                |
|-----------------|---------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Adam.....       | 130.... | 230....          | *230                     |
| Seth.....       | 105.... | 205....          | *205                     |
| Enos.....       | 90....  | 190....          | *190                     |
| Cainan.....     | 70....  | 170....          | *170                     |
| Mahalaleel..... | 65....  | 165....          | *165                     |
| Jared.....      | 162.... | 162....          | 162                      |
| Enoch.....      | 65....  | 165....          | *165                     |
| Methuselah..... | 187..   | { 167 }<br>187   | 187                      |
| Lamech.....     | 182.... | 188....          | 182                      |
| Noah.....       | 600.... | 600....          | 600                      |
| <hr/>           |         |                  |                          |
|                 | 1656    | { 2242 }<br>2262 | *2656 : actual sum 2256. |

It is of course certain that the successive editors of Josephus were Hellenists, who would honestly suppose that they were only doing justice to their author by bringing him more into conformity with the Septuagint, by adding the *six* hundreds and the *one* thousand, which are marked with asterisks. The only marvel is that their care extended no further, and that they neither attended to the odd numbers nor to the sum total ; thus leaving indisputable traces, not merely of the original sum 1656, but also of the

\* Josephus, Antiq. Jud. I. iii. 4.



182 years of Lamech, which are to be traced to the Hebrew only.

2. Josephus states that Abraham was born 292 years after the Flood, and when Terah was 70 years old. Then follow the details which are supposed to prove this\* :—

|                        | Heb.   | Sept.           | Josephus.             |
|------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Shem after the Flood.. | 2....  | 2....           | 12                    |
| Arphaxad.....          | 35.... | 135....         | *135                  |
| (Cainan) .....         |        | (130)....       | —                     |
| Salah .....            | 30.... | 130....         | *130                  |
| Eber.....              | 34.... | 134....         | *134                  |
| Peleg.....             | 30.... | 130....         | *130                  |
| Reu.....               | 32.... | 132....         | *130                  |
| Serug .....            | 30.... | 130....         | *132                  |
| Nahor.....             | 29..   | { 79<br>179 }   | *120                  |
| Terah .....            | 70.... | 70....          | 70                    |
|                        | 292    | { 942<br>1042 } | 292 : actual sum 993. |

Here again the Hellenist editors content themselves with the *seven* centenary additions which are marked with the asterisks, neglecting, as before, the sum total and the details, both manifestly derived from the Hebrew; the sum total exactly so;—the details, though slightly confused, exceeding the sum total only by *an unit*. The most remarkable feature in this confusion, the 12 years given to Shem's generation, will perhaps cause the less surprise, when it is explained that Josephus begins his enumeration with Terah and ends with Shem;—so that if *he* or his *transcribers* (it scarcely concerns us to know which) had inadvertently given but 20

\* Antiq. Jud. I. vi. 5.



years to Nahor, the deficient 9 years would have required to be supplied at the end of the list, and might accordingly be restored with undue haste as 10. Josephus does not recognise the second Cainan, nor either 79 or the 179 years of Nahor; though his 20 years may well have the connexion just now supposed with the original 29. It deserves remark too that Josephus here distinctly adopts the error which has so generally prevailed, of fixing the birth of Abraham at the 70th instead of the 130th year of Terah.

3. Josephus computes the foundation of Solomon's Temple to have been 592 years from the Exodus; 1020 from Abraham's entrance into Canaan;—1440 from the Deluge, and 3102 from the Creation. This gives for the Patriarchal Chronology the following results\*.

|                                     |      |                 |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------|
| From the Creation .....             | 3102 | Hebrew          |
| From the Deluge .....               | 1440 |                 |
| <hr/>                               |      |                 |
| From the Creation to Deluge.....    | 1662 | instead of 1656 |
| From the Deluge .....               | 1440 |                 |
| From the Call of Abraham ....       | 1020 |                 |
| <hr/>                               |      |                 |
| From the Deluge to the Call .....   | 420  | instead of 427  |
| <hr/>                               |      |                 |
| From the Creation to the Call ..... | 2082 | instead of 2083 |
| <hr/>                               |      |                 |

Here then, though there is a slight derangement of the Antediluvian and Postdiluvian portions of the calculation, the sum is within *an unit* of the Hebrew numbers. Moreover, in this instance, Josephus does not overlook the 60 years which

\* Antiq. Jud. VIII. iii. 1.



result from fixing the birth of Abraham correctly at the 130th year of Terah.

4. Again, he reckons that the Temple was burnt\*

470 years, 6 months, and 10 days from its building  
 1062 ..... from the Exodus  
 1957 ..... from the Deluge  
 3513 ..... from the Creation

This gives

|                                      |      |                 |      |        |
|--------------------------------------|------|-----------------|------|--------|
|                                      | y.   | m.              | d.   |        |
| From the Creation ..                 | 3513 | ..6             | ..10 | Hebrew |
| From the Deluge....                  | 1957 | ..6             | ..10 |        |
| <hr/>                                |      |                 |      |        |
| From Creation to Deluge .....        | 1556 | instead of 1656 |      |        |
| From the Deluge....                  | 1957 | ..6             | ..10 |        |
| From the Exodus ..                   | 1062 | ..6             | ..10 |        |
| <hr/>                                |      |                 |      |        |
| From Deluge to Exodus                | 895  | .....           |      |        |
| Deduct years of sojourn              | 430  | .....           |      |        |
| <hr/>                                |      |                 |      |        |
| From Deluge to Call of Abraham ..... | 465  | instead of 427  |      |        |
| <hr/>                                |      |                 |      |        |
| From Creation to Call.....           | 2021 | instead of 2083 |      |        |

We have here an erroneous calculation to a considerable amount;—but I am under a strong impression that it is chiefly traceable to two oversights ;—one, the inadvertent transfer of a century from the Antediluvian to the Postdiluvian period ;—the other, a recurrence of the old mistake about Abraham's birth at the 70th year of Terah.

Retransfer the century, and of course  
 the sum still remains as before ..... 2021  
 Add the 60 deficient years of Abraham ..60 Hebrew  
 And we now have the sum ..... 2081 instead of 2083.

This makes a very near approach to the Hebrew

\* Antiq. Jud. X. viii. 5.



sum total ;—but I conceive that we need not rest even here. For let us but adopt the very probable supposition, that the first-named oversight may have arisen from placing the point of demarcation at Noah's generation, and that Josephus compounded it, like some more professed chronologers than himself, with the actual birth of Shem, and the loss of *two* years after the Deluge is easily accounted for. Let us replace these *two* years, and we have the 2083 years of the Hebrew complete.

But however this may be, and whatever may be the proportion in which the irregularities which have been noticed are attributable to Josephus or his transcribers respectively, their amount is not such as to obscure either the obvious fact of the existence of the Hebrew numbers in the days of Josephus, or the manifest certainty of his having made them the basis of his own calculations. The two last instances, which have been produced from his works, shew no traces whatever of Hellenistic interference ; and the two first shew it only in those prominent statements, which, if we suppose in his editors the slightest wish to sustain the credit of their author, they would naturally have desired to bring to a conformity, in round numbers at least, with the established Chronology of their age. That they should have limited their care to this, —neglecting the minor traces of the original computation, and not even condescending to ar-



range the sums total in accordance with the altered details, is no less remarkable, than it is for our present purpose abundantly satisfactory, as finally leaving us in possession of an unanswerable argument for the originality of the Hebrew Chronology. Should we hesitate to admit so decisive a conclusion, let us assume the opposite hypothesis, and suppose the Masoretic Jews, after they had corrupted their own genealogies, desirous of introducing a confirmation of their scheme into the text of Josephus. Would they have bestowed their fruitless pains on two or three smaller numbers, producing no sensible approach to their reduced Chronology, and on a few detached, and at the same time really erroneous and inconsistent statements, and have left untouched those obtrusive centenary differences, which could not fail to arrest the attention of every reader, and assist in maintaining as before the general belief of that more remote antiquity of the World, which they were anxious to deny? And more than this, even supposing them to have been reduced to an insidious rather than an open attempt of this kind, by what possibility could the Jews of Palestine have succeeded in tampering at all with a work already widely circulated by Greek editors among the learned of the age?

The faithful guardianship of the Sacred Books of the Old Testament by the enemies of Christianity having always been regarded as a leading



argument for its truth, its virtual abandonment by the advocates of the Septuagint Chronology is, to say the least of it, indiscreet and unfortunate. The conclusion therefore in favour of the Hebrew Genealogies, which I trust we may now consider to have been securely established, becomes doubly acceptable, as involving the acquittal of God's ancient people from the charge of flagrant sacrilege, and the restoration to its legitimate rank of no unimportant evidence of our Faith.

I have already adverted to the probability of the various readings of the Septuagint numbers having originated in the varied endeavours to adapt the Chronology of the Bible to the Millenary traditions of the duration of the World. In fact, so long as the Hellenist transcribers of the Septuagint simply held in view the production of a plausible correspondence with the high antiquity claimed by the Priests and Historians of Egypt, minute variation was wholly uncalled for, and they would naturally content themselves with such round numbers as the twelve established centenary additions and the one addition of 50 years in the case of Nahor, where a century might well appear less consistent with the declining standard of human life. Here then I consider that what may be called the *primary* innovations of the Septuagint Chronology found their limit;—unless by possibility the interpolated generation of the second Cainan may also belong



to the same class. At what period the *secondary* innovations, in other words the Millennarian adaptations, were first contrived it is not perhaps easy to determine; but the order in which, and the purpose for which, they were successively adopted, I believe to be traceable throughout.

1. First comes the favourite idea of looking to the days of Peleg for the "division" of time; and we find Africanus calculating his *death* at precisely 3000 years from the Creation; the only trespass on the exactness of the *primary* additions to the Hebrew numbers is the raising of Lamech's generation from 182 to 188, a change which Chronologers, as far as I have seen, appear quite at a loss to account for, and which, till it is accounted for, looks very like caprice or accident.

With this addition Africanus of course, like the Septuagint, makes the amount of years from the Creation to the Flood ..... 2262.

Then follows Arphaxad's generation ..... 135

Salah's ditto ..... 130

Eber's ditto ..... 134

Peleg's ditto ..... 130

Ditto Residue ..... 209

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3000  
—\*

It may be observed that Africanus here misses *two* years after the Flood; but he is far from singular in this error, which arises from the very general supposition that Shem was Noah's eldest son, and if so, born when his father's age was 500, instead of 502, which was the actual case.

\* Suidas (in voce Φάλεκ) has a similar computation.



2. Next in order comes the attempt to fix the Millennary demarcation (and certainly with greater plausibility) no longer at the death of Peleg, but at his generation, at the transmission, that is, of the Chronological series from his own name to that of his son. For the discovery of the process by which this result was obtained I am indebted to the ingenious tract of Gregorie on “the Disproof of the *Kaivàn δεύτερος*\*.”

He first states the enumeration of Theophilus of Antioch, which making Adam’s generation 330 instead of 230, raises the date of

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| The Flood to     | 2362, and with the addition of |
| Arphaxad . . . . | 135                            |
| Sala . . . . .   | 130                            |
| Eber . . . . .   | 134                            |
| Phalec . . . . . | 130                            |

gives 2891 years;

and then explains the remainder of the proceeding as follows: “By the period of Theophilus the interval from Adam to Phalec was 2891 years: to this 110 years were to be added. First therefore, and to make it look more unlike a cheat, they cut off 20 years from Methusala’s sum; and whereas Theophilus had reckoned him at 187, they set him down 167, as in some copies it still standeth. Then it was from Adam to Phalec 2871 years. This done, they insert a new Cainan, assigning him

\* Posthumous Tracts of John Gregorie, M.A., chaplain of Christ Church, Oxford, p. 90.



“ 130 years, which added to the former sum,  
“ precisely maketh up 1001 years from Adam to  
“ the 130th year of Phalec.”

I am inclined so far to differ from Gregorie, as to disbelieve the gratuitous adoption by Theophilus, or any one else, of the startling addition of a new century to Adam's generation, before it was required in combination with the second Cainan and the reduced generation of Methuselah for the purpose here supposed, and to believe that the second Cainan, whether in the first instance with or without these accompaniments, was a much earlier introduction\*;—though at the same time I give him full credit for his acuteness in detecting the component parts of the combination, which he has so happily elucidated. This is more especially due to him, since variations, at first surreptitiously combined for a specific purpose, and afterwards partially adopted or rejected according to the judgment of successive transcribers, (many of whom had no suspicion of their original bearing, and more particularly so, after the lapse of 500 years from the Christian era had finally disappointed the Millennarian expectations of those times,) could seldom have all presented themselves to notice in one and the same copy, thus rendering it exceedingly difficult to arrive at such a reconstruction as that, by

\* Demetrius (temp. Ptolemy Philopator) has a calculation which *implies* the second Cainan; but may it not have been tampered with by Greek Editors? See Jackson, p. 69.



which Gregorie has thrown so clear a light in no less than *three* of the *secondary* innovations which perplex the Septuagint. The redundant year casts no improbability on the supposition which has been adopted;—for the contriver of the “cheat” could not venture to betray it to certain detection by either giving Adam 229 years, or Cainan 129;—or by deducting 21 years from Methuselah. It was far more prudent to assume 3000 complete years, and *one* year current.

3. The one innovation still to be accounted for,—viz., the additional century sometimes given to Nahor, evidently contemplated the adaptation of the Exode to the *fourth* step of the Millennary System. It seems also at the same time to have very opportunely superseded the great *prima facie* improbability of Adam’s generation of 330 years. The calculation, after we have traced the previous schemes, becomes a very easy one.

|                                                       |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|
| To the Flood, as in the scheme of Africanus . . . . . | 2262 |
| Shem after the Flood . . . . .                        | 2    |
| Arphaxad . . . . .                                    | 135  |
| Cainan interpolated . . . . .                         | 130  |
| Salah . . . . .                                       | 130  |
| Eber . . . . .                                        | 134  |
| Peleg . . . . .                                       | 130  |
| Reu . . . . .                                         | 132  |
| Serug . . . . .                                       | 130  |
| Nahor 79 + 100 . . . . .                              | 179  |
| Terah . . . . .                                       | 130  |
| To the Call of Abraham . . . . .                      | 75   |
| To the Exode . . . . .                                | 430  |
| <hr/>                                                 |      |
| From the Creation to the Flood . . . . .              | 3999 |
| <hr/>                                                 |      |



Here again the addition of 101 years to Nahor was out of the question. It was better to rest satisfied with having at all events reached the *four thousandth* year, or possibly to adopt the not unprecedented supposition of reckoning the year of the Flood independently of the ordinary calculation before and after it, which would make the 4000 years complete.

The correctness of these conclusions receives, I think, no small support from the comparative hold, which these *secondary* innovations have respectively maintained on the text of the Septuagint. The addition of 6 years to Lamech's generation, having formed a component part of all the three combinations which have been traced, is found in the received text, with little or no opposition from various reading. The second Cainan, having been required in two of the combinations, maintains its place with comparatively few authorities against it. The 20 years abstracted from Methuselah, and the century added to Nahor, being applicable to only one combination respectively, though they maintain their place in the text of the Septuagint, are encountered by a formidable array of opposing copies, particularly the latter, as being, we may surmise, *prima facie* much the more obtrusive and improbable. And finally the century forced on Adam's already too extended generation, and apparently superseded afterwards from a sense of its glaring unreasonableness, has entirely lost



its hold on the received text, and is recognised by no more than about three authorities besides Theophilus\*.

Where error is to be investigated and exposed, it must always be satisfactory to trace it to its source. But in the present instance the investigation has resulted in a very important addition to an advantage partially obtained by the examination of the mutilated dates of Josephus; viz.—that, whereas we have already, I trust, fully recognised the claims of the Hebrew over the Septuagint Chronology, though by arguments often bearing more on the broader lines of distinction between them than on their minuter parts, we may now enjoy a confident assurance that even the units and tens of the Hebrew computation, being, of course, the numbers which are by far the most exposed to the suspicion of corruption through design or accident, are precisely the same as the Hellenistic transcribers originally found them, and for the most part left them, till they were tampered with by the Millennarian theorists, for purposes, and to an amount, obviously assignable in every instance.

The tradition that the World, or at least the present state of it, would continue for only six thousand years, appears, whatever may have been its origin, to have existed from a very remote antiquity, not merely among the Jews who put this mystical interpretation on the six days of

\* Septuagint. Holmes and Parsons' edit.



Creation, but among the Greeks also ; for Plato cites a prophecy of Orpheus, that the world was to be consumed by fire in the sixth generation or Millennary\*. Citations from the Fathers, shewing the prevalence of similar opinions in their days, might be produced to any extent. The following from Lactantius may suffice. “ Per  
“ secula sex, id est, annorum sex millia, manere  
“ hoc statu mundum necesse est. Dies enim  
“ magnus Dei mille annorum circulo terminatur,  
“ sicut indicat propheta, qui dicit, Ante oculos  
“ tuos, Domine, mille anni tanquam dies unus†.” The expectation of Christians therefore that the terminations of the successive Millennia, or of some of them, would be marked by striking and cardinal events in the history of mankind, was natural enough, and their endeavours to strain these assumed coincidences somewhat beyond the simple evidences of the several cases, though less excusable, may be accounted for. When their dependence however on what I will now venture to call a mistaken system of Chronology had brought their calculations to a close prematurely by about 14 or 15 centuries, their Millennary theories and the tradition, on which they had based them, lost their credit as a matter of course, and fell into oblivion together. Nevertheless the early existence of such traditional notions must have added considerably to the

\* Plato, *Phileb.* 159 ; also cf. Jackson, vol. I. p. 97.

† Lactantius *de Vitâ Beat.* lib. viii. 14.



interest excited about 10 or 11 centuries later, when Chronologers of eminence, taking the Hebrew computation for their guide, professed to have traced two far more wonderful Millennary coincidences, and to have accurately identified the dates of the Dedication of Solomon's Temple and the Birth of Christ respectively with the close of the third and fourth Millennia of the World.

That the popular system of Ussher and his followers, however valuable in many particulars, has failed in satisfactorily establishing these important points, will not, I apprehend, be denied by any one who has given his attention to the subject. Its aberrations however, as will be seen in the course of the ensuing pages, are in various instances open to observation and remedy; and it is besides worthy of remark that Capellus, Petavius, Bedford, Ferguson, and many others, who, without pretending to such critical coincidences, have followed up the evidences of Scripture Chronology as they presented themselves to their judgment, have made very near, though unequal approaches to the same conclusions. May there not then even yet remain some room for hoping, that with patient investigation, a strict adherence to legitimate evidence, a freedom, so far as it may be possible, from the prejudices of hypothesis, and above all, an humble and implicit reliance on those inspired notices of time, which have been so distinctly and emphatically



vouchsafed, and a confident trust that the same Holy Spirit which dictated them has not failed to preserve them from a corruption, which would utterly defeat what I cannot but regard as their undoubted object, a more satisfactory result may by the Divine blessing be still attainable? It is almost needless to repeat, that the Hebrew Genealogies must alone be relied on as the basis of this or any other attempt to attain it.



## CHAPTER II.

### FROM THE CREATION TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM,

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THE Masoretic Hebrew numbers being assumed as our guide in deriving the early Chronology of the World from the years successively assigned to the Patriarchs at the birth of their sons, we must, in order to begin the calculation with due accuracy, establish, as satisfactorily as the case will admit, the season of the year at which the world was created, and from which, of course, the years in the series "Anno Mundi" must be held to commence. Chronologers are far from being agreed on this point; their opinions being divided between the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. And the truth of the matter does not appear to be absolutely demonstrable from the declarations of inspired Scripture. To Scripture however we must at all events have recourse for the leading arguments in favour of the conclusion which we adopt.

In the first place, all are agreed, that when the Israelites were leaving Egypt, the commencement of the year was changed by the Divine command,



and that that which had previously been the seventh month became the first\*. Those who advocate the vernal equinox as the season of the Creation are inclined to argue that the Almighty thus restored a tradition which had been lost in Egypt or elsewhere. This supposition, if plausible, is of course wholly gratuitous, and may be fairly met by another, which, though we may grant it to be also gratuitous, is at least as plausible as the first; viz. that the calendar in use having been desecrated by the recurrence of heathen festivals, a new one marked by the Divinely appointed feasts and ordinances of the Mosaic Law might be one very effectual method of establishing that separation from the surrounding idolatry, which was so peremptorily enjoined. It makes much in favour of the same conclusion, that though the year was thus formally altered by changing the numerical designations of the months for sacred purposes and for historical records, yet for all ordinary affairs the old reckoning was still allowed to prevail, and the year was understood to begin and end as before. Thus Moses himself speaks of the “feast of ingathering which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field†;” and the Prophet Joel of “the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month‡;” and Josephus explains that “Though Moses began with the month Nisan for all that related to

\* Exod. xii. 2.

† Exod. xxiii. 16.

‡ Joel ii. 23.



“ the worship of God, yet for purchases and sales  
 “ and all other transactions he preserved the  
 “ original order\*.” It is worthy of notice too  
 that even in one sacred institution the old order  
 of the year was of necessity maintained; for if  
 the Sabbatical year had commenced otherwise  
 than in the Autumn, the understood relation  
 between the seed not sown and the harvest not  
 reaped, would have been destroyed. The year of  
 Jubile too was proclaimed by the trumpet in the  
 seventh month†. However poetical imagination  
 may point to the spring as the infancy of the  
 World; if by spring is meant the vernal equinox,  
 nature herself seems to repudiate an order of  
 things which cuts off the seed time from the  
 harvest. Even the winter solstice falls too late  
 by many weeks for that actual spring, which is  
 properly indicated by the earliest germs of annual  
 vegetation.

With regard to the doubts which have been  
 considered to beset the question from the variety  
 of computations observable among the nations of  
 heathen antiquity, arising probably from an un-  
 skilful adjustment of the solar and lunar cycles,  
 or from peculiarity of climate, or sometimes  
 perhaps from more arbitrary causes, it will be  
 seen that they at least apply to an historical

\* Josephi Antiq. Jud. I. iii. 3. Οὗτος δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς ἀπάσας  
 τὰς εἰς τὸ Θεῖον τιμὰς ἦρχεν· ἐπιμέντοιγε πράσεις καὶ ὧνὰς, καὶ τὴν  
 ἄλλην διοίκησιν, τὸν πρῶτον κόσμον διεφύλαξε.

† Lev. xv. 2.



period many ages later than that which is treated of in the Mosaic records, and to nations far more remotely and widely dispersed from the cradle of the human race. We cannot readily conceive a tradition of this kind to have failed between Adam and Noah, who required but one link of connexion, of which the intermediate line of Patriarchs afforded many; as they were almost all contemporary with them both. Noah again survived almost to the birth of Abraham; and Eber, who attained the greatest age of all the Postdiluvian Patriarchs, born as he was before the dispersion of mankind, even outlived Abraham; and, what perhaps bears still more upon the present question, he does not appear even to have removed from the immediate vicinity of Babel; nor indeed do any of the Hebrew line, which more especially regarded him as their Patriarch, till Abraham quitted Mesopotamia by God's command, and became the head of the Divinely separated race, among whom the knowledge of true religion was to be preserved. It will not, I imagine, be contended, that we find any thing in the account of their sojournings, or even of their bondage, which can lead us to suppose that they had varied from a tradition of this nature; much less that they had reversed it. Whatever else they were, they were one among those Oriental tribes which have ever been found most tenacious of early customs, and of this in particular. Jerome recognised it many centuries afterwards;



“ Apud Orientales populos post collectionem frugum et torcularia October erat primus mensis\*.”

I do not mean to assert that the arguments thus far adduced result in absolute demonstration; but since choice must be made, I cannot hesitate as to the opinion which is to be adopted; and am content to leave its more complete justification to those critical coincidences, which would comparatively fail under the other alternative, while they marvellously sanction this.

This preliminary being settled, and the Hebrew numbers being relied on as our authority, the next care is to avoid error in the mode of combining them. I believe indeed that where due attention has been given to the calculation, a correct result in years has generally been attained. Since however instances have been found, not merely of hesitation in the process, but of considerable error in conducting it, one or two indispensable principles of calculation must be distinctly stated, and strictly adhered to. In the first place, the numbers must be taken in full, with no allowance for incomplete or current years; as any hesitation on this point would at once destroy that infallible certainty which must have been intended. In the next place, the Creation being assumed to have taken place about the Autumnal Equinox, the years of Adam's life and of the world's age must end in the Autumn; and we must reckon that every succeed-

\* Jerom. Comment. on Ezekiel i. 3.



ing Patriarch was born in the Autumn also. We need not suppose indeed that this was always actually the case, but we must rely implicitly on the Spirit of Truth, which dictated the successive sums of years, for having duly compensated every excess and defect, and produced an exactly true result. On the other hand, the years at which the Patriarchs died, though given, we may suppose, to shew us the general duration of life in these primitive times, yet not having the same chronological purpose to answer, need not, and indeed, in some cases, must not, be called to so exact and full a reckoning. For instance, unless the year of Methuselah's death be considered as current and incomplete, he must appear to have lived to nearly the end of the Deluge. These plain, and I should say, undeniably necessary, principles being premised, there need be no hesitation in maintaining, on reference to the tabular scheme already given, that the Deluge took place during the year A. M. 1656; or, to speak more precisely, that the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah's life, and the 1656<sup>th</sup> year of the World's duration, was completed at the Autumnal season which terminated the Deluge.

Doubts have been suggested with regard to the time of Arphaxad's birth, whether the two years after the Deluge are to be counted from the beginning or from the end of it. But we must not allow the plain and necessary principle already laid down to be shaken by any doubt of



the kind. If the birth in this one instance is reckoned from the year of the Deluge, instead of from a certain year of a Patriarch's life, the end of a complete year must obviously be understood in the one case as well as in the other. We have to notice however that Shem, though the first named, was not the first born son of Noah. Indeed Japheth is elsewhere\* called the elder brother; and we now see from the birth of Arphaxad, two years after the Flood, when his father Shem was 100 years old, that Shem must have been born just two years after Japheth, when Noah was at the age of 502. The succeeding generations, down to the birth of Terah inclusive, require no comment. But Terah's sons are not named in the order of their birth, any more than those of Noah. Considering the extreme facility of the proof of this, it is somewhat remarkable that the opinion, that Abraham, simply because his name stands the first of the three, was born when his father was 70, should have been so long allowed to confuse the chronology of this period. We have already seen the traces of this error in Josephus, and I believe it continued to be very prevalent till Ussher clearly pointed out the undeniable fact, that Terah having died at the age of 205, when Abraham was only 75, the birth of the latter must have taken place when his father's age was 130.

It remains to be observed, that we have the

\* Gen. x. 21.



precedent of Methuselah for admitting that Terah died before the completion of his 205<sup>th</sup> year, should there be any independent reason for the supposition ;—and moreover, that the years of Abraham's life, corresponding (as our rule of calculation necessarily requires) with those of his father, in the seasons of their commencement and close, Abraham's 75<sup>th</sup> year must be considered to have been no nearer to its termination than Terah's 205<sup>th</sup>, at the time of the death of the latter ;—against which there lies no separate objection in the case of Abraham, since his age of 75 is not given as that from which the birth of his son is to be chronologically counted. Now there does exist an independent and special reason for supposing the year of the world, in which Terah died, and Abraham received his Call and commenced his sojourn, to have been incomplete at the time of those events. For the 430 years of sojourn so distinctly laid down as ending with the Exodus, which took place in the Spring\*, necessarily refer us to the corresponding season for their commencement, unless we would abandon that accuracy and precision which Sacred Chronology demands, especially in the case of those great inclusive numbers of which this is one. The full consideration of this period of sojourn, both as to its commencement and its details, belongs to another chapter. I will conclude this by stating the year of the World, to which the

\* Exodus xii. 40, 41.



Patriarchal Genealogies have safely conducted us, as traced from the Creation to the Call of Abraham. Omitting as superfluous the recapitulation of the tabular scheme of births from the Creation to the Deluge, we may see the result as follows:—

| Anno Mundi.                                       |            |                                |                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| From the Creation to the Deluge } inclusive ..... |            | 1656                           | complete years ending in the Autumn. |
| To the birth of Arphaxad..                        |            | 2                              | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Salah..... | 35                             | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Eber.....  | 30                             | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Peleg..... | 34                             | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Reu.....   | 30                             | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Serug..... | 32                             | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Nahor..... | 30                             | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Terah..... | 29                             | .. .. .                              |
| .. ..                                             | Abraham .. | 130                            | .. .. .                              |
| To the Call of Abraham.                           |            | 74 years and about six months. |                                      |
| From the Creation to the Call, <u>2082</u>        |            |                                | .. .. .                              |



### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS OF SOJOURN.

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WE now come to the first of those great inclusive numbers, by which Inspiration enables us to measure with accuracy such Chronological periods, as we have not otherwise sufficient data for calculating;—and with regard to which therefore all that is required, after ascertaining their commencement and their close, is to shew clearly that the intermediate transactions can be fairly arranged within the given limits, without contradicting any of those notes of time, which in a variety of instances are actually afforded.

In the first place, the necessity of such an inspired number in the period before us will be immediately obvious. For though our chronological course will be found tolerably clear from the Call of Abraham to the death of Levi, yet the successive births of Kohath and Amram, being undated, must without this supplementary aid have left the remaining amount of time a matter of complete uncertainty. The inspired number itself is thus distinctly declared:—"Now the



“sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt  
 “in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.  
 “And it came to pass at the end of the four  
 “hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame  
 “day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the  
 “Lord went out from the land of Egypt\*.” At  
 the first glance it might probably appear, that  
 the time of the actual sojourning in Egypt was  
 all that is here defined. But this supposition  
 lies readily open to such palpable contradictions,  
 that it becomes a matter of astonishment, that  
 Theophilus†, a professed chronologer, should be  
 found among the number of those who have  
 hastily adopted it. When God renewed His pro-  
 mises to Abraham, after he had been some years,  
 apparently about nine or ten, in the land of  
 Canaan, He added the following important decla-  
 rations,—“Know of a surety that thy seed shall  
 “be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and  
 “shall serve them; and they shall afflict them  
 “four hundred years;”. . . . .“But in the fourth  
 “generation they shall come hither again ‡.”  
 Now the 400 years, though a round number, and  
 not to be understood with minute exactness,  
 whilst it very fairly applies to the time, yet only  
 in prospect, when Abraham should have raised  
 an offspring capable of the predicted destiny,  
 appears no probable representative of the full

\* Exod. xii. 40, 41.

† S. Theophilus Antioch. ad Autolyc. iii. 24.

‡ Gen. xv. 13. 16.



term of 430 years, for the commencement of which therefore we naturally look back to Abraham's previous history. But passing this, the assurance of the return of his seed from the land of bondage in the fourth generation makes it absolutely certain, that the 400 years of oppression must include their previous residence in Canaan in a state of subordination to their more powerful neighbours, as well as their more decided servitude in Egypt. For the four generations which sojourned in Egypt are distinctly to be traced in the line of Levi, Kohath, Amram and Moses. Moses was born 80 years before the Exodus, that is, according to the scheme of Theophilus, 350 years after the arrival of the Israelites in Egypt; whereas Kohath, whose birth preceded that event, lived but 133\* years in all; and his son Amram, the father of Moses, only 187†. If this were not sufficiently convincing, it appears besides that the mother of Moses was a daughter of Levi;—not in any vague sense, as a daughter of his house, but strictly so;—for it is distinctly stated that, “the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare unto Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram, Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister‡.” And again, “Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses§.” Now Levi dying at

\* Exod. vi. 18.

† Ibid. 20.

‡ Numb. xxvi. 59.

§ Exod. vi. 20.



the age of 137\*, and having been about 43 when he entered Egypt, lived there only about 94 years;—which requires, according to the scheme which we are examining, that Jochebed should have borne Moses about 256 years after her father's death. We are thus utterly precluded from adopting the descent into Egypt, as the commencement of the sojourning of the children of Israel;—neither can we find any sensible relief from this embarrassment in the additional 33 years, which is all that we could obtain by looking to Jacob's removal from Padan Aram with his family. Moreover their previous history evidently presents nothing resembling such a commencement in Canaan, till we have traced it back to the Call of Abraham;—so that we have no resource, but to consider the children of Israel as beginning their sojourn in the person of their illustrious progenitor;—just as in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said, that “Levi paid tithes in Abraham; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedec met him†.” St. Paul confirms this conclusion, when he speaks of the covenant made with Abraham, as that which “the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul‡.”

Chronologers however have not been wanting, who observing that, in strictness, Abraham received two calls, or at least made two migrations, one from Ur to Haran or Charran, and the other

\* Exod. vi. 16.

† Heb. vii. 9, 10.

‡ Gal. iii. 17.



from Haran to Canaan after Terah's death, have raised a question, from which of these events the 430 years are to be counted ; and Ussher\* cites, besides the ordinary Jewish computations, a great many authorities nearer to his own day favourable to the prior date, and going so far as to assume an interval of five years between these migrations. He argues indeed most unanswerably against such an opinion, and even more elaborately than the case may perhaps seem to demand ; this one argument appearing all-sufficient, viz. that whereas Moses distinctly states that Abraham was 75 years old when he entered Canaan†, and again that Hagar was given to him when he' had been ten years in Canaan‡, thus clearly indicating the true commencement of the sojourn, he appends no note of time whatever to his call from Ur ; thus in fact leaving to a careful chronologer no room for hesitation, unless he would give up a well defined certainty for the vagueness of mere conjecture.

The assumption however of the five years' interval between the two Calls was not so entirely capricious as it might perhaps at first appear ;—since it evidently arose from a misplaced anxiety to discover an unwonted exactness in the round number of 400 years, which, if counted from the first appearance of Abraham's promised seed, viz. just 25 years after he entered Canaan, required

\* Ussher, Chron. Sac. cap. ix.

† Gen. xii. 4.

‡ Gen. xvi. 3.



five previous years to complete the 430 years of sojourn. And this gratuitous fancy seems to have been sometimes encountered still more absurdly by another, viz. that of assuming that Isaac's weaning was deferred till he was five years old, under the idea that Ishmael's mocking on that occasion appeared an appropriate introduction to the 400 years of oppression which would then exactly remain\*. Ussher may be said almost to confound the two Calls in one; as he places the migration from Ur in the Autumn, and the arrival in Canaan in the following Spring†. But this appears somewhat inconsistent with what is stated of Abraham taking "Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran‡," the increase that is of the bondservants, whether by purchase or by births, or by both, for which some time must have been required. Bishop Lloyd, whose marginal dates in the English Bible are a modification and often an improvement of Ussher's scheme, allows two years' interval, which certainly appears a somewhat nearer approach to a reasonable conjecture. Hales is particularly anxious to distinguish between the two Calls, and ven-

\* See Patrick in loc. and Lightfoot, p. 13. Ishmael's age of 19 appears particularly inconsistent with what is related of the feebleness of childhood under which he suffered when dismissed Gen. xxi. 15.

† Ussher, p. 6.

‡ Gen. xii. 5.



tures to fix the interval between them at 14 years complete or 15 current\* ; having by his own confession no other authority than that of Abulfaragi, a credulous though learned writer, who appears to have placed an equal and indiscriminate confidence in Rabbinical fancies and Scripture facts†.

The reference of St. Paul to the promises made to Abraham and his seed, as preceding by 430 years the promulgation of the Law‡, has also afforded some temptation to theorists, whose scheme required a deviation from the ordinary calculation ;—these promises having in fact been made with more or less distinctness at least six times, reckoning from the call of Abraham to the day on which Isaac was offered§. Among these the striking circumstances which attended Abraham's sacrifice of the divided victims|| have drawn special attention to the covenant then made¶. But unfortunately for the theorists this event occurred nine or ten years after the entrance into Canaan ;—whereas, if the declaration in Exodus xii. 40, demands one condition more

\* Hales, vol. ii. 108.

† Vide Gregorii Abul Pharagii Historia Dynastiarum, in Pocock's Latin Translation, p. 13. He speaks quite as decisively of Kohath being the father of Amram at the age of 60, and Amram of Moses at the age of 75, as of any scripturally attested dates, p. 17. Also of Abraham offering up Isaac at the age of 19 on Mount Nebo, p. 14.

‡ Gal. iii. 17.

§ Gen. xii. 2. 7; xiii. 14; xv. 5-18; xvii. 4-8; xxii. 15-18.

|| Gen. xv.

¶ Vide Ussher.



clearly than another, it is that the commencement of the 430 years should coincide with the commencement of a sojourn. This at once puts out of the calculation every promise except those made at the time of the migrations to Haran and Canaan respectively. Between these the choice has been already taken, and for reasons already assigned, which can scarcely fail to have derived additional confirmation even from the brief and imperfect reference which has now been made to the variety of results to which the caprices of fancy and the prejudices of theory may conduct us. In fact, to any one who believes, what I implicitly rely on as the very basis of my system, that the Chronological notices of Scripture have been given by Divine Inspiration for very important ends, and moreover have been preserved in their integrity, so far at least as concerned those ends, the necessity of strictly adhering to a plainly stated Scriptural number, however perplexing to his preconceived ideas, in preference to any calculation, conjecture, or tradition, however plausible, which rests on some inferior authority, must assume the force of absolute demonstration.

The 430 years of Sojourn therefore having manifestly commenced with Abraham's arrival in Canaan, and closed with the Exodus, it remains to shew that the intervening transactions may be consistently arranged within these limits. It requires but few words to prove this in their



broad outline. Isaac was born 25 years after the entrance into Canaan, and was 60 years old at the birth of Jacob\*, and Jacob, on his introduction to Pharaoh, states his age as 130 years†. These numbers together make 215, or exactly half the years of Sojourn. The remaining 215 years are not to be traced throughout by steps equally definite. But we have the satisfaction of perceiving, that, as Levi and Kohath and Amram are expressly stated to have reached the ages of 137, 133, and 137 respectively‡, and Moses was born 80 years before the Exodus, the 135 years which preceded his birth may not only fall readily between the generations of Kohath and Amram, averaging, no matter in what actual disproportion, about 70 years each, but leave perfectly credible, on inspired testimony, the marvellous fact of Levi, who entered Egypt at the age of about 43, and survived there about 94 years, having, towards 20 years before his death, become the father of Jochebed, who, about 41 years after that event bare Moses to her nephew Amram.

The consistency of the great inclusive number of the years of Sojourn with the series of events, which must find their place within its limits, being thus, I trust, clearly shewn, the amount might at once have been added to the years already calculated from the Creation to the Call of Abraham. A brief reference however to some

\* Gen. xxv. 26.

† Gen. xlvii. 9.

‡ Exod. vi. 16, 18, 20.



of these particulars either on their own account, or on account of certain differences of opinion which have been entertained respecting the arrangement of several of them, will perhaps tend to impress some principles, and establish some facts, which may be found of service, as we proceed to the further consideration of the course of Sacred Chronology.

No attentive reader of the Old Testament can fail to regard Isaac as pre-eminently, and in a variety of ways, a type of the promised Messiah.—His birth miraculous and divinely predicted, and his proffered, though uncompleted sacrifice, strikingly attest this: and with regard to the last, his bearing the wood of the altar on which he was to have been slain, irresistibly recalls to us the bearing of his Cross by our blessed Redeemer; and the selection of the land of Moriah, coupled with the divine guidance to a particular mountain there, immediately afterwards designated “the Mount of the Lord\*,” naturally leads the thoughts to the site of that temple, whose sacrifices were to prefigure through successive ages the one great atonement, or even perhaps to the actual Calvary itself. I am besides much disposed to adopt the suggestion of Lightfoot†, that Isaac was probably offered at the same age as that of our Saviour at his Crucifixion. Lightfoot adverts also to the remarkable fact of Sarah being the only woman whose age at her death is

\* Gen. xxii. 14.

† Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 14. (London, 1684.)



recorded in Scripture ;—without however applying it, as I think he might well have done, to the support of his suggestion. For her death at the age of 127\*, when Isaac was of course 37, follows so closely in the Sacred narrative, after the account of the offering, (the report of Nahor's offspring being merely parenthetical, and not a statement of intervening events,) that an age nearly approaching to this, even without reference to any typical interpretation, might well have been deemed more probable than 25, the tradition of Josephus†, or 19, that of Abulpharagi. The exact age of our Saviour at his Crucifixion is not universally agreed on, and remains to be considered in the sequel ;—but every variety of opinion approaching so nearly to the limit in question, need it be regarded as a token of superstitious credulity to imagine, that since the typical reference of Isaac to the promised Redeemer is, in many points, so palpable and undeniable, this one exceptional statement of the age of a woman at her death may have been recorded for the very purpose of guiding the thoughtful student of the revealed word to the persuasion, that the human type and its Divine antitype agreed in this instance also? Demonstration of course is not contended for; and happily it is not essential to the great outline of Sacred Chronology which I have in view. The suggestion however is likely to be received

\* Gen. xxiii. 1.

† Antiq. Jud. I. xiii. 2.



with more or less of favour, according to the degree in which the minds of my readers may have realized the vast array and variety of type and similitude, and Chronological coincidence, which foreshadowed the attendant circumstances of the promised Messiah ;—and to their candid judgment I willingly leave it.

The next point, which calls for remark is the difference of opinion which prevails with regard to the age of Jacob at the time of his marriages, or rather, as to whether they took place at the beginning or the end of his first seven years' service. The great inclusive period of 430 years indeed need not be considered as affected by so slight a derangement of the intervening particulars. But it is always important to vindicate the plain declarations of Holy Scripture from those attempts to evade them, which a deference to *prima facie* probabilities is so apt to suggest; because, though in cases like the present their effects may be comparatively harmless, they may create much embarrassment in others, and must necessarily form a bad precedent in all. The temptations to scepticism in this instance appear to have been found in the advanced age of Jacob, when he retired to Mesopotamia, and the narrow limits to which the succession of Judah's early descendants is reduced by the ordinary interpretation. The actual age of Jacob when he first engaged in Laban's service, though not stated at the time, is open to



an easy calculation. He was 130 when he removed to Egypt, and Joseph was then 39; for he was 30 when he first stood before Pharaoh\*, and seven years of plenty and two of famine had since elapsed†. Consequently Jacob was 91 at Joseph's birth; which moreover took place exactly at the end of his 14 years' service‡. His age therefore at the commencement of that service was 77. That a man of 77 should engage in a service of seven years for a marriage, which was to be deferred to the end of it, would, no doubt be apt to provoke incredulity in any ordinary history. But God's dealings with the chosen race of Abraham form no ordinary history; and if we venture to treat it as such, we shall involve ourselves in hopeless inconsistency. Though eleven of the sons of Jacob thus appear to have been born from the 84th to the 91st year of his age; and Benjamin, when he must have been about 105, (for his birth took place after§ the affair of the Shechemites, which implies a certain degree of maturity in Dinah and her two brethren,) yet it should be borne in mind that these marvellously deferred births form merely the last step in a series of four successions from Terah inclusive, which linger through nearly as many centuries; and that without this or some other Providential check on the natural tendency to increase and multiply, the Israelites must have

\* Gen. xli. 46.

† Gen. xlv. 6.

‡ Gen. xxx. 25, 26.

§ Gen. xxxiv, xxxv.



long since, as already observed, outgrown all possibility of entering on their Egyptian sojourn at its appointed season.

Ussher may be considered as the leading authority for supposing that Jacob's marriages preceded his first seven years' service; and though he admits that the generality of interpreters are against him, his eminence as a chronologer appears to demand consideration for his main arguments. He insists strongly that the words, "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her\*," imply that he must have at once possessed the object of his affections, for that hope deferred would on the contrary, have made the days appear many†. But it is equally true that time may appear to pass rapidly and labour be found light, in the assured hope of its recompense. We need not however trouble ourselves to adjust the balance between these natural feelings; for it is at all events undeniable that Jacob was not allowed to possess Rachel till he had promised a second service of seven years ‡; so that the theory which supposes the marriages to have preceded all service, is actually overthrown by the passage which is resorted to for its support; since, in order to be consistent with this theory it should have said, that *fourteen* years, not *seven*, "seemed unto him but a few

\* Gen. xxix. 20.

† Ussher Chron. Sacr. cap. x.

‡ Gen. xxix. 18.



“days, &c.” Ussher dwells much also on the unreasonableness of including nine successive births; viz. those of the children of Leah and her handmaid Zilpah within the limits of seven years\*. The assumption however of any necessity for supposing all these births to have followed each other at regular intervals, is perfectly gratuitous. Leah evidently bare her four eldest sons in close succession, and then, on experiencing a suspension of fruitfulness, called in the aid of her handmaid, who bare two sons†. But, though their names are naturally mentioned next, to contend that they must both have preceded the births of Leah’s two youngest sons, is something very like inviting a difficulty where none exists. It is not to be imagined that Leah’s restoration to fruitfulness at once cut off the natural consequences of the intercourse which she had sanctioned; and should her barrenness have been as transient as, without any contradiction to the accompanying statements, it might have been, Dinah, as well as her two brothers might have been born within the seven years in question. But this is a nicety of calculation, on which we need not insist.

Clinton also, one of the most careful and judicious of modern chronologers, places the births of Jacob’s sons in his first seven years of service, assigning the close succession of Judah’s line as a proof that the case could not have been other-

\* Ussher Chron. Sacr. cap. x.

† Gen. xxx. 5-8.



wise. It is true indeed that by the common calculation Judah could scarcely have completed his 43rd year when he went into Egypt, which allows but an average of about 14 years each, to what, owing to the peculiar circumstances attending the birth of Pharez, were virtually three generations. Parallel cases however are not absolutely unrecorded. Josiah was the father of Jehoiakim at the age of 14\*, and Ahaz of Hezekiah when he was at least two years younger†; these cases being both attested by the concurrent authorities of the Books of Kings and Chronicles. Against such testimony we have no right to be peremptory in pronouncing what may or may not be occasionally possible, especially in climates so different from our own.

It may perhaps escape the notice of some of these reasoners, that by adding, as they must, six or seven years to the age of Levi on his arrival in Egypt, they are to the same extent adding also to the already marvellous sum of 178 years which they have to distribute between the two generations of Levi and Jochebed; the latter, be it observed, a female, in whose case we have no warrant for supposing anything actually miraculous, as we have in that of Sarah. For it may thus be found that in their haste to escape from the *Charybdis* of Judah's offspring, they are encountering a *Scylla*, on which their cherished

\* 2 Kings xxii. 1, xxiii. 36; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1, xxxvi. 5.

† 2 Kings xvi. 1, xviii. 2; 2 Chron. xxviii. 1, xxix. 1.



views of probability and consistency may quite as readily suffer shipwreck. The story indeed of Jacob's marriages is narrated at once with such simplicity and perspicuity, as to be capable, it might be imagined, of but one interpretation by an unprejudiced reader. There is one passage in it indeed, which has not yet been adverted to, which appears of itself to place the matter beyond controversy. When Jacob discovers the imposition which had been put on him by Laban, he exclaims, "What is this that thou hast done unto me? Did I not serve with thee for Rachel \*?" Assuredly this can only mean the stipulated service of seven years already performed.

The recorded line of descent from Levi to Moses may be considered as answering two very important purposes; marking as it does the fulfilment of the prophecy that the Israelites should return to Canaan in the fourth generation, and at the same time utterly overthrowing the hasty theory which would confine the 430 years of sojourn to Egypt alone. This slow succession however must by no means be regarded as inconsistent with a much more rapid one in other lines. The extraordinary fruitfulness which then distinguished this chosen race, implies births from an early to a late age of the same parents, and the successions in different lines would be

\* Gen. xxix. 25. (ἐδούλευσα παρά σοι, Sept. *servivi tibi* Vulg).



more or fewer accordingly as they were transmitted through the elder or younger children of these numerous families. While the sons of Moses and Aaron formed only the fourth descent from Levi, the daughters of Zelophehad are found in the sixth from Joseph through Manasseh\*, and Joshua apparently in the ninth from the same Patriarch through Ephraim. Indeed, unless we assume such cases as these to have been generally prevalent, we cannot satisfactorily account for that prodigious multiplication of numbers, which from the 70, who entered Egypt, raised in little more than two centuries the “603,500 men “able to go forth to war,” who quitted it at the Exodus†.

The most intelligible mode of stating the Chronology of this period and the evidences on which it rests, appears to be, first to give in a descending line from the Call of Abraham a series of leading events, the dates of which may be collected from notes of time which the Sacred History itself supplies down to the death of Levi, where this advantage fails us;—then to arrange the concluding dates which we obtain by ascending from the Exodus, and which we can carry no higher than the birth of Aaron;—and finally to insert above these last the exact number of years required to complete the great inclusive number which defines the whole amount.

\* Numb. xxvii. 1.

† Numb. i. 45, 46.



|                                                                          | years |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| From the Call of Abraham to the birth of Ishmael . . . . .               | 11    |
| To the birth of Isaac . . . . .                                          | 14    |
| To the death of Sarah, aged 127, Isaac being then . . . . .              | 37    |
| To the birth of Jacob (Isaac being 60), . . . . .                        | 23    |
| To Jacob's removal to Padan Aran, . . . . .                              | 77    |
| To the birth of Levi . . . . .                                           | 10    |
| To the birth of Joseph . . . . .                                         | 4     |
| To the return to Canaan . . . . .                                        | 6     |
| Joseph sold into Egypt, aged 17, . . . . .                               | 11    |
| Joseph stands before Pharaoh, aged 30, . . . . .                         | 13    |
| To the descent into Egypt (Jacob aged 130, Joseph 39) . .                | 9     |
| Sum of years to the descent into Egypt . . . . .                         | 215   |
| To the death of Jacob aged 147 . . . . .                                 | 17    |
| To the death of Joseph aged 110 . . . . .                                | 54    |
| To the death of Levi aged 137 . . . . .                                  | 23    |
| Intervening years required to complete the great }<br>inclusive number } | 38    |
| From the birth of Aaron to that of Moses . . . . .                       | 3     |
| Moses retires to Midian aged . . . . .                                   | 40    |
| To the Exodus (Moses being 80) . . . . .                                 | 40    |
| Total years of Sojourn . . . . .                                         | 430   |

The absolute necessity of the inspired number to enable us to measure this period must now be completely evident. Without it indeed the years intervening between the death of Levi and the birth of Aaron could have been open to conjecture only;—and conjecture in this case would probably have run into wild extremes. For while some would have been led to enlarge them greatly, in order to account for the vast increase of the Israelites in Egypt, others again, whose attention had been drawn to the marvellously protracted generations of Levi and Jochebed, might have been tempted to reduce them within the narrowest possible compass. Nay, even the notes



of time, which enable us to calculate so large a portion of this period, can scarcely be said in every instance to relieve us from all hesitation between complete and current years, and to establish that undoubted accuracy of result, which Sacred Chronology demands. The emphatic precision however of the great inclusive number supersedes the necessity of minute exactness in arranging its component parts, and establishes the following amount of years from the Creation to the Exodus.

|                                                    | Anno Mundi                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| From the Creation to the Call of Abraham . . . . . | 2082 years and<br>about six months.            |
| From the Call to the Exodus . . . . .              | 430 complete<br>years from spring to spring. — |
| From the Creation to the Exodus . . . . .          | 2512 years and<br>about six months. —          |



## CHAPTER IV.

### FROM THE EXODUS TO THE FOUNDATION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

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WE now come to a period, which it has been found much more difficult to reconcile in detail with the inspired number which has been given to define its duration. At first sight it offers a case very parallel to that which we have just been considering ;—presenting certain portions which we have data for calculating, and others where the means of doing so fail us. Thus the 40 years passed in the Wilderness and seven or eight more before the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan are obvious enough, but we are left to conjecture the time of the deaths of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him, as also the duration of the period of anarchy which succeeded. Then follow a succession of servitudes and intervals of rest under the Judges, computed with some appearance of regularity ;—but this advantage ceases once more in the days of Samuel and Saul, though we finally recover it in the 40 years of David's reign and the three first of Solomon's.



The great inclusive number too, which is thus indispensably required, is laid down for us quite as distinctly as before,—and in these plain terms, “And it came to pass in the four hundred and “eightieth year after the children of Israel were “come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth “year of Solomon’s reign over Israel in the “month Zif, which is the second month, that he “began to build the house of the Lord\*.” And the Book of Chronicles informs us, that it was “on the second day of the second month†.” *Prima facie* therefore we might hope as before to find little difficulty in adapting the particulars to the divinely authorized limits, which, avoiding needless fractions, we may call 479 years and one month.

The difficulty however, if success may be regarded as a criterion, has been found most formidable. Those who, like Josephus, pay no attention to the great inclusive number, or, like his follower Hales, regard it as corrupt or spurious, —taking the notes of time consecutively where they find them, and supplying the undated intervals according to their judgment, are led to exceed the assumed limits by more than a century. Clinton‡ comes nearly to a similar conclusion, consoling himself however with what he still trusts he may regard as an inspired authority, in the Chronological outline of this period adverted to

\* 1 Kings vi. 1.

† 2 Chron. iii. 2.

‡ Clinton. Fast. Hell. vol. i. p. 312, 313.



by St. Paul in his address delivered in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. And I fear too we must add to these perplexities, that those who, like Ussher, Lightfoot, Lloyd, and others, have laboured to reduce the intermediate transactions to the inspired limits, have been very unsuccessful in proposing such schemes as can at all escape the charge of even glaring inconsistency, thus in fact promoting and confirming that apparently general spirit of scepticism on this point, which the course of my subject now calls upon me to combat.

The confidence reposed by many in this chronological sketch of St. Paul seems to mark it out at once as demanding an immediate and searching investigation. The words of his address, which bear on the question before us, are these : “ And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot ; and after that he gave unto them Judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet ; and afterwards they desired a King, and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years\*.” Now 450 years, together with the necessary additions for the time before the conquest of Canaan, and that from Samuel to Solomon, certainly do produce a sum exceeding by more than a century the authoritative statement

\* Acts xiii. 19—21.



in the Book of Kings. But a little consideration will shew us, that, even if we are bound to regard this number as given by St. Paul under the guidance of inspiration, it falls far short of compensating for the loss which we should sustain by the corruption, if such unhappily it were, of an accurately stated number; as it lays claim to no more than an approximation to the truth, (*ὥς*, about 450 years,) and even leaves the intended commencement of the period, which it loosely indicates, subject to doubt and difficulty. For it may be asked, does it begin with Othniel, the first Judge, or with Joshua himself, whose office was so similar? Or if with Joshua, does it include his whole administration, or, as the text seems to imply, only what remained of it after the conquest of Canaan? In short it is obvious to remark, that here at least can be discovered no guide whatever to that strict accuracy of Computation, which Sacred Chronology demands, and without which it must entirely lose its interest and its value.

Since however, if we allow the full weight of undoubted inspiration to the larger reckoning of St. Paul, it must, even as an approximation to the actual amount of years, be found to be utterly irreconcilable with the smaller and more definite statement of the Book of Kings, and at all events destroy its authority, though it cannot usefully replace it; it remains to be considered, whether, still supposing St. Paul to possess an



inspired knowledge of the early chronology of the Israelites, he is here pressing it on the attention of his audience. On the contrary, is it not manifest that his numbers are quite incidentally mentioned, and have little or no bearing on his argument, so that a difference of a century more or less would not have affected it at all? Nay more,—that this brief reference to God's early dealings with their forefathers being merely an introductory illustration of his main argument the fulfilment of these gracious promises in Jesus Christ, would not any formal statement of chronological points have been completely out of place, and if it should chance to have differed from their preconceived notions, might it not even have interrupted their attention to the all-important subject of his discourse? and consequently might not St. Paul have even purposely avoided any deviation from familiar and received notions on the matter in question?

But once more, I believe it to be a generally adopted, and, I cannot but think, a sound opinion, that the inspiration of the Apostles and Evangelists and other sacred writers, while its infallibility secured them from error in doctrine and precept, and whatever else concerned their divine commission, did not invariably extend to more ordinary matters, on which they were left to collect their information and form their opinions like other men, and might occasionally, like other men, err in doing so. It is needless to refer to



some of the more familiar instances of this kind of inaccuracy, which appear to leave the rigid advocates of universal and plenary inspiration without a reply, though at the same time they really answer the highly important purpose of raising the sacred writers above all suspicion of collusion and preconcerted statements. But, as St. Paul's case is now immediately under consideration, I would observe that he occasionally even disclaims for himself this perfect knowledge. "To the rest speak I, not the Lord\*." "Now behold I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there †." At other times he is even confident of that which turns out otherwise, as for example, that his Ephesian converts would see his face no more ‡; and when guided by human probability, and as yet unapprised of the merciful deliverance which would be granted, he said, "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives §." I am aware that the former of these two instances is considered by some as a decided proof that St. Paul never did see the Ephesians again, thus allowing his presumed foreknowledge to embarrass the dates of his Epistles, as the instance before us does those of the book of Judges.

I think however that we may be quite justified

\* 1 Cor. vii. 12.

† Acts xx. 22.

‡ Acts xx. 25.

§ Acts xxvii. 10.



in concluding, that St. Paul, in the computation before us, was but incidentally citing the current opinions of his countrymen, and deriving his statements from no other source than what was equally open to them. In fact, that the prevailing notions with regard to the chronology of this period corresponded pretty nearly with St. Paul's numbers, is plain from what has been already noticed of the general calculations of Josephus, almost a contemporary writer.

Some further observations are still required with regard to the 40 years' reign of Saul; because some chronologers are found, who, although satisfied to abandon the claims of the indefinite 450 years, adhere tenaciously to these 40 years, as stated with due precision, and moreover as confirmed by the computation of Josephus. This precision however is more apparent than real: some of our best commentators (Poole, Whitby, and others) include the administration of Samuel within the same 40 years; since not being one of the recognised judges, there would otherwise seem to be an unexplained hiatus in the reckoning.

The "afterwards" of our translation too may imperfectly represent the *καὶ κεῖθεν* of the original, which much more clearly implies a continuity in the calculation. The reference to Josephus for support in this opinion, though I believe very generally adopted, appears to me especially unfortunate. Josephus certainly is found\* making

\* *Antiq. Jud.* VI. xiv. 9.



such a statement, according to the reading recognised by the majority of copies; but it is made in a way that seems to carry with it its own confutation; for it is said that Saul reigned 18 years during the life-time of Samuel, and 22 years after his death. Though the exact year of Samuel's death is not known, it evidently occurred during the persecutions which David suffered towards the close of Saul's reign: should Josephus therefore have reckoned the remainder at 2 years, his suggestion would have been reasonable enough, and the subsequent corruption into 22 by no means incredible, whereas, that Josephus, with the sacred narrative before him, could have really imagined Saul to have survived Samuel 22 years, is simply and absolutely impossible. It happens however that Josephus in another passage, unopposed by various readings, actually assigns 20 years to the reign of Saul\*. Indeed there are various facts connected with the history of his reign which, on a clear examination and comparison of particulars, quite forbid the supposition that it could have lasted 40 years, or indeed more than half that time. Two years only after its commencement his son Jonathan commanded a detachment of his army; his age therefore, when anointed king, could not well have been less than about 35 or 36; indeed he is not described as נָעָר (nahar, a youth) like Samuel at his call, or David, when he encountered Goliath,

\* *Antiq. Jud.* X. viii. 4.



but בַּחֹרֶר (bachoor, or choice man, one in his prime). If therefore he reigned 40 years, he must have been at the age of about 76 in full armour and personally engaged at the battle of Gilboa; and but little more than a year before, when in pursuit of David, he is found passing the night in the open air with his spear by his side like the rest of his followers. His hardy habits may have made all this possible at the age of between 50 and 60, but when approaching 80 it is clearly out of the question.

Again, David being 30 years old at the death of Saul, on the hypothesis we are considering, was not born until about the 10th year of his reign; so that the apparently equal friendship of David and Jonathan, which is so exquisitely pourtrayed, must have been contracted between a youth of 20 and a man of 50.

Again, Samuel died about two years before Saul; and it must have been several years before Saul's elevation to the throne, that his advancing years induced him to appoint his sons judges in his stead. Now though his having arrived at the age of 90 or even 100 may not be inadmissible, yet this does not occur to those, who at little more than half that age had become practically sensible of their declining powers. In other words, if Samuel because he was old\* made his sons judges over Israel in his stead, his having

\* 1 Sam. vii. 1-5.



lived 40 years or more after that is quite incredible.

Again, Saul's first act of disobedience occurred when he had reigned but two years or little more, and Samuel thus early declared, "Thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, &c.\*" These words would seem to common apprehension to imply, not merely a living individual, but one who had lived long enough to afford the promise of the character supposed. But according to the received theory this was seven or eight years before the birth of David, who was but 30 years old at the death of Saul.

Again, his second great offence†, his disobedience with regard to the Amalekites, was clearly but about 10 or 11 years before the actual termination of his reign, for his sentence is then more decisively denounced, Samuel quits his presence, and is shortly roused from his disposition to mourn for Saul by a command to anoint David, then a youth approaching manhood, whose victory over Goliath appears to follow soon after. Here then we have perhaps 26 or 27 years between these two great offences of Saul, which, considering his obvious propensity to swerve from his allegiance to the Almighty, constitute an enormous improbability.

\* 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

† 1 Sam. xv.



I agree indeed with those commentators, who suppose that the first threat denounced against him was conditional, and his probation incomplete, and that confirmed repentance might still have saved him. For after some less successful conflicts with the Philistines, a decisive victory over them is granted him; besides he triumphs over the rest of his enemies on every side\*. Having attained this state of prosperity and, with an army of more than 200,000 men at his command, he is commissioned to execute the Divine vengeance on the Amalekites; and then it is that he so signally fails in his allegiance, and finally forfeits the favour and protection of Heaven. Though there are no notes of time given us, which can enable us to date this succession of events, I am persuaded that no unprejudiced reader could possibly suppose them to have extended beyond the limits of a very few years. And it is a remarkable fact, as illustrating the impossibility of consistently extending Saul's reign to 40 years, or even to any near approach to that number, that Bishop Lloyd in his arrangement of the marginal dates of our Bible, when driven by common sense to shorten the interval between Saul's two great transgressions, and thus finding 16 years thrown on his hands without one event to mark them, actually assigns them their place between two consecutive verses, relating particulars which no one could

\* 1 Sam. xi. 4, 46, 47.



well doubt to have been as intimately connected in historical succession as in the narrative itself; the one describing Samuel as finally leaving Saul on his rejection, though he mourned for him;—the other representing the Lord as arousing him from his mourning to go and anoint David\*.

I have been thus particular in investigating the details of Saul's reign, because, so long as any lingering deference to the authority, not only of St. Paul's general computation, but of this minor portion of it, rests in the minds of the inquirer, it effectually disqualifies him for encountering the real difficulties which beset this period of sacred chronology. I trust however that I may now be allowed to consider that ample reasons have been assigned for our declining to be guided by a vague statement, which casually fell from the lips of the Apostle without emphasis or apparent object in a discourse on far loftier matters than chronological data, and for placing our undivided reliance on the one all-sufficient notice in the book of Kings, which is given with an emphatic precision which marks the importance attached to it by the inspired writer, and is well calculated to lead us to the confident persuasion that the same Holy Spirit, which dictated the sacred number, has preserved it also from corruption.

Having cleared the way for the more candid consideration of the claims of the 479 years and

\* 1 Sam. xv. 35; xvi. 1.



one month to be accounted the exact limit of the period, which elapsed between the Exodus and the foundation of the Temple, I might proceed at once to the calculation of its details, but for the necessity of previously pressing on the attention of my readers two very important passages in the book of Judges, containing facts and principles, the neglect of which could not fail to involve us in confusion and inconsistency.

First then it is distinctly declared, that “when  
“ the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord  
“ was with the judge and delivered them out of  
“ the hand of their enemies all the days of the  
“ judge\*.” Thus the protector judge was the pledge of security, and though a period of rest might sometimes continue after his death, a recurrence of servitude could by no possibility precede it. I am quite confident that no exception to this rule can be fairly established, but the partial one of Samson, an exception, which in fact strengthens the rule, because of him it was expressly foretold, not that he should fully deliver, but that he should begin to deliver, Israel out of the hand of the Philistines†.

The other passage is that‡ which represents Jephthah as asking the Ammonites, why they had failed to recover the territories in dispute during the 300 years that the Israelites had dwelt on their borders. Though chronologers have not altogether overlooked this text, few, if

\* Judges ii. 18.

† Ib. xiii. 5.

‡ Ib. xi. 26.



any appear to have duly appreciated its importance. In the first place as it sets the limit of about 300 years to a period, which a reader with no limit of this kind to restrain him would more probably have extended to more than 360, it is a seasonable check to the prevailing scepticism with regard to the genuineness of the 479 years; as it might naturally occur that a similar reduction to that, which is thus necessary in one part of the calculation, may after all be found practicable in the whole. In the next place, it is a safe guide to a more systematic and, therefore, more hopeful investigation of the case; for if we look at the whole difference *en masse*, and find that we have *prima facie* more than a century to get rid of, without knowing where to turn our eyes for the relief required, we are in danger of employing our efforts disproportionately, and erring both in excess and defect. This appears to have been precisely the case on the one hand with Ussher, and those who have with more or less modification adopted his system; for having contrived, in a way which will presently be noticed, to deduct about 40 years from Jephthah's 300, they have not only left themselves at liberty to indulge the established prejudice with regard to the length of Saul's reign, but shocked the judgment also by a most unwarranted prolongation of the Philistine servitudes. And, on the other hand, those whose calculation has led them in the first instance to exceed the limits of



the 300 years, pressed besides by the prescriptive demands of Saul's reign, have been driven to crowd and identify these servitudes, in a way which defies credibility still more than the opposite process.

There is one other observation to be made with regard to this important number before it is attempted to apply it. It is a round number, and therefore to be regarded as only an approximation to the exact truth. But though in indifferent matters we are left quite in doubt as to the defect or redundancy of round numbers, wherever they are employed as an argument, no doubt remains as to the side on which the variation is to be sought. The longer the Ammonites had neglected to enforce their claim, the stronger of course was the argument of Jephthah. The time therefore scarcely amounted to the full three centuries, at all events we may be quite certain it did not exceed them; for had it done so even in the most trifling degree, Jephthah would assuredly have said, "more than three hundred years." Having premised thus much, I propose to make a distinct calculation of the time that elapsed between the Exodus and Jephthah's victory; for when that is settled, we shall be in a far better condition to form a confident opinion as to the mode of treating the remaining period.

As has been already hinted, a reader of the books of Joshua and Judges, proceeding in a



simple and natural manner, guessing where he is obliged to guess, and reckoning the times of servitude, rest, and other numbers consecutively as they present themselves, would probably find this first portion alone exceed his necessary limits by more than 60 years. The mode in which Ussher and others attempt to solve the difficulty by omitting the years of servitude, and supposing them included in the years of rest, is strikingly unsatisfactory; and I quite agree with those who adopt the preferable supposition, that some one or more of the servitudes, being partial, might therefore have taken place without materially disturbing, or amounting to a contradiction of the state of repose which the country in general was enjoying.

In looking to the history with this view, the attention is naturally drawn to the long rest of 80 years, commencing with Ehud, and to the fact that the next servitude recorded (that of 20 years' duration), was simply a rebellion of tributary Canaanites dwelling chiefly among the tribe of Naphtali and at the northern extremity of the land, whose king reigned at Hazor near the small Semechonite lake on the upper Jordan, and who, by God's permission, now retaliated on their conquerors. Ten thousand men however of Naphtali and Zebulun, with some assistance from Issachar and Ephraim, finally subdued them: and I should apprehend that the pomp and circumstance given to this partial oppression in Deborah's song has



been the chief reason of its being allowed to embarrass Chronology by taking its place among the successive servitudes of the Israelite nation. The song itself if scrutinized will illustrate this conclusion. The forty thousand among whom neither shield nor spear was seen, without allowing for amplification, imply the subjection of less than a single tribe; for the particular tribe of Naphtali before their settlement in the land of promise numbered 45,400 men able to go to war, and cannot be supposed to have diminished in the interval. So little importance was attached to their thralldom by some of their nearest neighbours, that we find even Gileadite Manasseh would not cross the Jordan to help them, and Asshur continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his creeks, occupied apparently by his commercial concerns. Again, though in the parallel cases of Othniel and Gideon the 40 years of rest are distinctly stated to have continued during their lives respectively: yet it is not stated that Ehud survived for the 80 years which followed his successes; indeed the thing itself is wholly improbable; but it is said that when Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil, and incurred the servitude of which we are speaking; and indeed it was also after him but before the Canaanite oppression that Shamgar delivered Israel from a temporary inroad of the Philistines, which was apparently repulsed as soon as made. In short, the most reasonable conclusion appears



to be, that Ehud survived his victory somewhat less than 20 years, during which time the Israelites enjoyed that perfect exemption from hostilities, which was divinely attached to the life of their protector judge; and that though on his decease the pledge of complete security was removed, yet in this particular instance its interruptions were so limited and partial, as compared with the whole extent of the land of Israel, that it may be very consistently understood, that after the expulsion of the Moabites “the land had rest fourscore years\*.”

The next servitude however was of a far more formidable and extensive description; for the Midianites, in alliance with other Eastern tribes, and with the Amalekites also, ravaged the country from East to West, and produced a general desolation†.

Here then it is that we may, I think, with confidence conclude that the 80 years' rest obtained by Ehud, and the 40‡ of Deborah and Barak found their common termination. 60 years are excluded by this natural and easy arrangement, and no difficulty will remain in bringing the succession of events within the limits assigned to them by Jephthah.

The conquest of the territories bordering on the Ammonites having been effected one year before the passage of the Jordan, that is 39 years

\* Judges iii. 30.

† Ibid. vi. 1—6.

‡ Ibid. v. 31.



after the Exodus, we have (allowing Jephthah's 300 years for the sake of immediate perspicuity to stand in full) an inclusive period of 39 years to limit our first calculation. We have then to begin as before with the brief introductory portion, which there are data for computing.

It will not be questioned that precisely 40 years elapsed between the coming out of Egypt and the Passover, which was celebrated 4 days after the miraculous passage of the Jordan. We find too that Caleb at the first division of the conquered lands stated his own age to be 85, and explained that he was 40 years old when Moses sent him to spy out the land\*. The spies it appears were sent forth in the second year after the Exodus, and in the summer, viz., in the season of "the first ripe grapes†;" so that taking into account also the 45 years of Caleb's life, which had elapsed, we perceive that 46 years and rather more had passed since the coming out of Egypt, or, in other words, that the 47th was now current. This however could not well have been, as the marginal dates of our Bible seem to indicate, the year of the final settlement of all the tribes of Israel in their respective possessions. Caleb at the very time, in which he speaks of his age, and claims Hebron for his inheritance, alludes to the necessity of dispossessing the Anakims‡. There were besides still seven tribes unpro-

\* Joshua xiv. 7.

† Numb. xiii. 20—25.

‡ Joshua xiv. 12.



vided for, and it was found previously necessary to send men to describe the land and divide it into their seven portions\*. The occupation therefore of these portions could scarcely have been accomplished before the following year. The cities of refuge also, and those for the Priests and Levites were still to be appointed. And after all this it was that the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, who according to their covenant had attended their brethren through their years of conflict, were dismissed by Joshua with a blessing to their trans-Jordanic possessions†. All this could scarcely have come to pass till the 48th year from the Exodus was far advanced. Many indeed suppose it to have been much later; but as no hostile opposition remained to retard their last arrangements, there seems, I think, to have been no occasion for further delay; and I am much inclined to the supposition that the 49th year from the Exodus was the first year, which *at its commencement* found the whole of the twelve tribes peaceably located in their respective possessions, and fully enabled to commence simultaneously the regular observance of all the ordinances of the Mosaic Law.

I have noticed these particulars more minutely than the case now before us may seem to call for, on account of their apparent bearing on the question of Sabbatical years and jubilees,

\* Joshua xviii. 1—6.

† Ibid. xxii. 1—6.



as will be better seen hereafter. All that we are at present concerned to observe is, that from this point Chronological notices fail us through the remaining years of Joshua and the surviving elders and the succeeding anarchy, which being undated must find their limits according to the system adopted in the last chapter, in the interval which the inclusive number of 339 years is finally found to allow them.

The alternations of rest and servitude down to the date of Jephthah's victory over the Ammonites will require no further comment after the caution already given with regard to the arrangement of one portion of them. The outline of the calculation therefore may stand thus:

|                                                                                                             | Years. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Sojourn in the wilderness.....                                                                              | 40     |
| To the settlement of the twelve tribes.....                                                                 | 8      |
| Interval (allowed by the inclusive number) for Joshua }<br>and the surviving elders, and the anarchy..... } | 32     |
| Mesopotamian servitude.....                                                                                 | 8      |
| Othniel Judge.....                                                                                          | 40     |
| Moabite servitude.....                                                                                      | 18     |
| Rest commencing with Ehud, and including the partial }<br>Canaanite oppression..... }                       | 80     |
| Midianite servitude.....                                                                                    | 7      |
| Gideon Judge.....                                                                                           | 40     |
| Abimelech's usurpation.....                                                                                 | 3      |
| Tolah Judge.....                                                                                            | 23     |
| Jair Judge.....                                                                                             | 22     |
| Servitude under Ammonites and Philistines.....                                                              | 18     |
| Total to Jephthah's victory .....                                                                           | 339    |

What has been said of the high probability of Jephthah's round number of 300 years rather exceeding the actual amount of time, may derive



some confirmation from a glance at the items of the preceding scheme, from which some abatement in the sense of round numbers and current years might naturally be assumed; not to mention, that the interval preceding the first servitude may perhaps appear to have found rather a liberal allowance. In matters however so completely conjectural, and in which much variety of judgment may be so fairly exercised, it seems more prudent to decline fixing on any specific reduction, and to leave this first calculation to stand at its full amount, merely bearing it well in mind, that if it should be found to press too closely on any of the details of the remaining portion of the period, we know where we might consistently resort for the relief required.

The advantage gained by having settled this basis for our further proceedings will at once appear. There remain but 140 years and one month to complete the whole 479 years and one month—and of these beyond dispute 3 years and a month belong to the reign of Solomon, and 40 years to that of David; so that we have only 97 years, which call for discussion, and within which we are required to include the transactions between the victory of Jephthah and the accession of David: and having this clear notion of what we have to trust to, we shall soon find, that we are neither forced into the unnatural compression, nor tempted to the unwarrantable expansion of the Philistine servitudes, which I



have before alluded to as calculated to offend the judgment of the inquirer after truth.

But as these presumed errors ought in fairness to fall by their own demerits, rather than by any limits arbitrarily set by myself, a brief reference to them and to the objections to their adoption respectively appear to be called for. The first is to be found in the marginal dates of the English Bible, and is also suggested by Bp. Patrick ; the idea being, that, as the Israelites fell at the same time into subjection to the Ammonites and Philistines, and Jephthah is only said to have rescued them from the first at the end of 18 years, the Philistine servitude continued, and is to be identified with that for 40 years, which Samson brought nearly to its close, its actual termination occurring shortly after his death, on the overthrow of the Philistines at Mizpeh\*. Among the results of this scheme are, that Samson's 20 years of exploit synchronize with the days of Jephthah, Ibzan, and Elon, and that Abdon is left to survive him, as the contemporary of the declining years of Samuel, and to within a few years of the reign of Saul. This extraordinary compression of the sacred narrative appears to stand self-condemned, but to remove any remaining doubt of its inconsistency I must press on the observation that it completely violates the distinct and declared principle of God's dealing with his people at this period of their history, which has been before

\* 1 Samuel vii. 6-11.



explained, viz. that the existence of the warrior-judge was the pledge of perfect sincerity. When Gideon had subdued the Midianites, we hear no more of their Philistine and Amalekite confederates, but on the contrary, that “the land was in “quietness forty years in the days of Gideon\*.” Just so in the present instance when Jephthah had subdued the Ammonites, their Philistine allies must of course have retired from the hopeless contest. His brief remaining life of six years required the succession of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon to maintain the rest for 31 years, which God was then pleased to grant. But to suppose these divinely appointed champions to have lost their high prerogative, and to have been involved in a Philistine servitude, is utterly inconsistent with plain Scripture. On the death of Abdon we read of no immediately succeeding judge, but of renewed offences and consequent servitude, the Philistine servitude of 40 years†.

We have next to consider the presumed error of those, who fail to identify this servitude with the state of distress and subjection, from which the repentant Israelites were relieved through the prayers of Samuel on the day of Mizpeh, and thus embarrass their scheme with an additional, or else a greatly protracted Philistine servitude. I am not here confuting the longer chronology of Josephus or of Hales and others his modern followers, who, having cast off all

\* Judges viii. 28.

† Judges xiii. 1.



regard to the Scriptural limit of 479 years, have inconsiderately treated the books of Judges and Samuel as altogether consecutive history, and made Eli's administration begin after that of Samson was closed by his death. But my business of course is with those only, who, like Ussher and his followers, being desirous of observing the established limits, and fully aware that Eli's history must to some extent come to a parallel with the book of Judges, have been unfortunate in tracing this parallel, and have produced contradiction and inconsistency. They have not indeed ventured to disgrace the prowess of Jephthah and his successors by an unsubdued servitude, or called in question their independent sufficiency by affording them the aid of Samson; but allowing very properly the 40 years of Philistine servitude to commence, when the protecting hand of Abdon was withdrawn, they have unfortunately fixed on the same 40 years for the administration of Eli, thus inevitably adding to their calculation the 20 years which intervened between Eli's death, and the deliverance from bondage at Mizpeh. A servitude of 40 years, with no deliverance and rest to terminate it, is of course a contradiction in terms; they must therefore suppose some unrecorded period of rest, and an additional though shorter servitude.

But how stands the evidence of Scripture? Samson was promised at the beginning of the 40 years, and born perhaps after one year's interval;



and allowing him time to arrive at manhood, the 20 years, during which he judged Israel, must bring his death to the very verge of the coming deliverance, though the book of Judges closes without recording it. If we turn to the book of Samuel for the information which we require, we find no immediate notice of any such deliverance; but after tracing the early history of Samuel, we find a Philistine oppression in full operation towards the close of Eli's life, and on the ill-advised effort to shake off the yoke, we find (from the fears excited in the Philistines by the presence of the ark in battle, lest they should become servants to the Hebrews, as the Hebrews had been to them\*), that it must have been of some duration. The calamitous result of the battle only confirmed the servitude, and though the Philistines incurred some temporary suffering through the capture of the ark, yet not a symptom of deliverance or rest for the Israelites is discoverable during the 20 years in which the ark was at Kirjath-Jearim, but they "lamented after the Lord," till at last their repentance and the prayers of Samuel obtained for them the miraculous victory of Mizpeh: and then, but not before, we find the Philistines subdued, and the lost cities "restored to Israel from Ekron unto Gath†." Here then obviously ends the Philistine servitude, and unless we would swell these 40 years into 60, it undeniably follows, that the

\* 1 Samuel iv. 9.

† Ibid. vii. 14.



miraculous prowess of Samson, which kept the Philistines somewhat severely in check, though without completely subduing them, was displayed, not during the life of Eli, but afterwards, during the 20 years of servitude, in which the ark remained at Kirjath-Jearim.

But this mistaken prolongation of the years of servitude betrays its advocates into another and still more glaring inconsistency. Though Samuel was probably somewhat advanced in life on the day of Mizpeh, yet he must at all events be allowed a few years more for that peaceable administration, in which "he went from *year* to *year* in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh\*:" so that (however speedily the ill-government of his sons might afterwards have produced the discontent which ensued, and the desire for a king,) to confine, as this scheme does, to a single year the whole time that elapsed between the deliverance from the Philistines and the accession of Saul, is an expedient which no one could have dreamt of adopting, till compelled to it by the straits to which a mistaken theory had reduced him. The besetting misconception, which drives all these systems into inevitable inconsistency in some point or other of their reckoning, is no doubt the deeply rooted prejudice in favour of the 40 years' reign of Saul: but even that would have left space enough in the instance before us, after the extraordinary liberties which

\* 1 Samuel vii. 16.



had been taken in the reduction of the earlier periods of servitude and rest, unless one other prejudice had contributed its share of pressure, I mean the supposition, that Eli is to be included in the series of regular judges, and the making him the successor not the contemporary of Abdon.

As this notion, though by no means universal, is still entertained by many, and whenever it is adopted can only lead to confusion, a few remarks tending to establish a clearer view of the case appear to be required. In the first place, involved as Eli was in a Philistine servitude, which he was wholly unable to shake off, he is destitute of the unfailing characteristic of the protector judges, and accordingly his name finds no place in the book of Judges, which closes the record of those divinely gifted champions. I think it cannot admit of a reasonable question, that besides the warrior-judges, who were raised up by the Almighty from time to time for the defence of Israel, there must have been a still more regular, though for the most part an unrecorded, succession of judges in civil causes. For there were intervals of servitude, in which no warrior-judges were to be found : and when they were in full official influence they could scarcely have superseded the necessity of such important coadjutors. As far as we can conjecture from the instances which present themselves in Eli and in Samuel, and, I think we may add, in Deborah, who judged Israel before she was associ-



ated with Barak, they were probably High Priests or Prophets. What I would urge is, that unless we would cast confusion into our chronological series, we must regard these as two parallel and totally distinct lines of succession. Hence, though it would be an inconsistency to make any two of the warrior-judges contemporaries, yet if Eli should appear to be the contemporary of Elon and Abdon, and Samuel of Samson, it is precisely what we had reason to expect. Hence it appears, that our safe and simple course lies entirely through Judges, and servitudes mentioned in the Book of Judges, till we finally lose its guidance at the death of Samson; and then having in the Books of Samuel recovered our clue, where alone the point of union is to be found, viz. in the closing year of the Philistine servitude, we may at once disencumber ourselves of the previous history of Eli and Samuel, it being quite a matter of indifference to our calculation how far Eli's 40 years may take him back as a contemporary of Jephthah's successors. Indeed the recorded 40 years of Eli's administration will now be found even to afford us a prospective advantage, for they leave us at liberty to suppose, that the birth of Samuel took place as early as certain other circumstances seem to indicate and require that it should. Eli's extreme age of 98 appears to imply, that many years had elapsed since his culpable indulgence had fostered the depravity of his sons; and that the solemn denunciation



against them was not quickly followed by the threatened penalty, but that they fell in somewhat advanced life and persevering impenitence.

Hence referring to Samuel's part in these awful transactions, we may naturally conclude that at the time of the decease of Eli and his sons, he had himself reached a mature age suitable to the sacred office he was now called on to sustain. Twenty years more elapsed before the victory at Mizpeh, so that the years cannot well be very many, which reasonable conjecture would interpose between this event and the commencement of the reign of Saul. And now adopting the principles and precautions, which I have just suggested and explained, we may proceed to the remaining division of our calculation.

|                                                                                                                     | Yrs.      | Mths. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| From the Exodus to Jephthah's victory as before stated .....                                                        | 339       | -     |
| Jephthah Judge .....                                                                                                | 6         | -     |
| Ibzan .....                                                                                                         | 7         | -     |
| Elon .....                                                                                                          | 10        | -     |
| Abdon .....                                                                                                         | 8         | -     |
| Philistine servitude (including Samson's 20 years)....                                                              | 40        | -     |
| Interval allowed by the inclusive number for the administration of Samuel and his sons, and the reign of Saul ..... | 26        | -     |
| David's reign .....                                                                                                 | 40        | -     |
| Solomon's reign to the foundation of the temple .....                                                               | 3         | 1     |
|                                                                                                                     | <hr/> 479 | 1     |

Should it strike any persons, as I think it reasonably may, that Saul's reign must at all events have fallen little, if at all, short of 20 years, and that the remnant which this would



allow for Samuel and his sons appears insufficient, they have only to remember the probable surplus which has been previously established, and from which an addition of 3 or 4 years, or even more, might be fairly assumed for giving an improved appearance of consistency to the remainder of the calculation ; but it is far better to decline an attempt at an improvement, which can lead to no certain result. It is quite sufficient to perceive and acknowledge, as I trust my readers already do, that all the transactions recorded between the Exodus and the foundation of the Temple might, without contradicting any one scriptural note of time, be consistently placed, and on inspired authority to believe that they found their *actual* place, within the precise limits of the great inclusive number of 479 years and 1 month.

One or two supplementary notices seem desirable before we finally leave the consideration of this period. The facts recorded in the five last chapters of the Book of Judges are obviously out of their place in chronological succession.—There can however be no difficulty in assigning the idolatrous innovations of Micah and the Danites, and the atrocities which brought such heavy retribution on the tribe of Benjamin, which are distinctly stated to have occurred in those days in which there was no king in Israel\*, to the interval of anarchy between the

\* Judges xxi. 25.



extinction of Joshua and the surviving elders, and the commencement of the Mesopotamian servitude. Phinehas the son of Eleazar too was the high Priest during the Benjamite calamities, which suits the time supposed exceedingly well.

The date of the transactions in the Book of Ruth may be conjectured as follows. From the entrance into Canaan to the end of the Moabite servitude there should seem to have been rather more than a century, and in the period of rest secured by the powerful rule of Ehud is to be found the season perhaps of all others, in which Israelites, whom famine or other causes might have led to seek a refuge in Moab, could have done so with the greatest confidence. The pedigree, of which Boaz forms a link, will accordingly enable us to place the probable date of his marriage with Ruth, on the return of Naomi from her 10 years' sojourn in Moab, at a corresponding period. He was the son of Salmon a prince of Judah, and of Rahab, who, though no doubt quite young at the capture of Jericho, must, as it will presently appear, have borne this son at an advanced age; and he again must have become the father of Obed at an advanced age also; making up between them towards a century and a half after the entrance into Canaan: so that about this point we may venture to date the transactions of the Book of Ruth. The pedigree however requires especial notice from the singular circumstance of its supplying but



four generations in little less than as many centuries ; for if we take from the whole number 479 the 73 years between David's birth and the foundation of the temple, together with the 40 years passed in the wilderness, there remain 366 years between the entrance into Canaan and the birth of David, to be divided between the four generations of Salmon or Rahab, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse\*.—To Rahab however, who had at all events attained the years of womanhood before the siege of Jericho, we shall scarcely assign besides more than 40 or 50 years of the 366 : and this leaves an average of rather more than 100 years to the generations of Boaz, Obed, and Jesse.—Births indeed at such advanced ages are not wholly unprecedented, for without going back so far as the birth of Abraham and those of his latest children, we have that of Jochebed, when the age of her father Levi must have approached 120 years, during the Egyptian sojourn : and not long before it that of Benjamin, when Jacob was perhaps 105 : and the idea of improbability, which might at first strike us on observing that by about the time of David the average duration of life appears to have been reduced to about its present standard, will be in some measure relieved by perceiving that this reduction was at all events recent. The contrast is indeed most striking between Moses at the age of 120 years, whose “ eye was not dim nor his natural force

\* Ruth iv. 21, 22 ; 1 Chron. ii. 11, 12 ; Matth. i. 5.



“ abated \*,” and Caleb too, who at the age of 85 could declare “ Lo ! I am as strong this day, as I “ was in the day that Moses sent me †,” and on the other hand Barzillai, who at the age of fourscore could not taste what he ate or what he drank ‡, and David himself, who sunk under the weight of years at the age of 70 ||.

There appears no warrant whatever for supposing as some have done, the omission of intermediate generations ; the few particulars recorded lead to no such conclusion. Boaz was evidently far advanced in life at the birth of Obed. David was the youngest of a numerous family, and so might have been Boaz, Obed, and Jesse. And we cannot consistently reject the clear and unvarying statements of inspiration, as given in the Books of Ruth and Chronicles, and adopted in the New Testament.

That some portion of the patriarchal longevity and vigour should have lingered on in the sacred line of the promised Saviour of the World, and that its transmission for the most part through parents advanced in life should for some ages have been among its marked distinctions, assuredly forms rather a claim to reverential notice than a subject of surprise or doubt. The three or four generations just referred to by no means stand alone in this peculiarity: not to dwell on the undoubted instances of Abraham,

\* Deuteronomy xxxiv. 7.

† Joshua xiv. 11.

‡ 2 Sam. xix. 35.

|| Josephi Antiq. Jud. VII. xv. 2.



Isaac, and Jacob, in whose cases a slow succession may well be deemed a special providence, and passing by the very peculiar exception of Pharez, and on to the Egyptian sojourn, where the rapid increase of numbers became as obviously providential, the line of the Messiah maintains nearly the same deliberate course: Hezron, Ram, Aminadab, and Nahshon occupy the whole time from the birth of Hezron\*, (a little before the going down into Egypt,) to the birth of Salmon, (who was probably a mere youth on the entrance into Canaan,) a space of about 240 years, giving an average of about 60 years to a generation, a very high one, under the then existing encouragements to early marriage.

And now with reference to what was urged in the preceding chapter as to the line from Levi to Moses refuting the theory of a longer sojourn in Egypt than the 215 years assigned to it, we may produce the four generations from Hezron to Nahshon as an additional confirmation of the same truth; and what is more to the immediate purpose of the present chapter, the four later generations supply a similar rebuke to the scepticism of those who with impatient haste pronounce on the impossibility of including the transactions between the Exodus and the foundation of the Temple within the limits which Scripture distinctly assigns them. For while they reject as corrupt the "480th year" of the Hebrew

\* Genesis xlv. 12.



text, and enlarge it generally by more than an additional century ; they are reduced to the unfortunate dilemma of either rejecting at the same time the repeated and unvarying record, which the Scriptures furnish us of these generations, or of enlarging them to an amount which bids defiance not to a reasonable faith only, but to credulity itself.

I confidently trust after what has been advanced, that my readers are brought to the conviction, that sacred chronology may claim not only the reasonableness, but the absolute necessity of maintaining the integrity of the text in question ; and will conclude the chapter by the distinct statement of the years in the reckoning Anno Mundi, to which we have now attained :

|                                                     |       |                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------|
|                                                     | A. M. |                                                   |
| To the Deluge. . . . .                              | 1656  | complete years ending in the autumn.              |
| To the call of Abraham                              | 426   | years and 6 months.                               |
|                                                     | <hr/> |                                                   |
| Total to the call of }<br>Abraham. . . . .          | 2082  | 6                                                 |
| To the Exodus. . . . .                              | 430   | complete years reckoned from spring<br>to spring. |
| Total to the Exodus. . .                            | 2512  | 6                                                 |
| To the foundation of }<br>the Temple. . . . .       | 479   | years and 1 month.                                |
|                                                     | <hr/> |                                                   |
| Total to the foundation }<br>of the Temple. . . . . | 2991  | 7                                                 |



## CHAPTER V.

### FROM THE FOUNDATION TO THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

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THIS brief, but chronologically most important, interval of time demands especial care and attention. There is however no real difficulty in computing it with sufficient exactness. Solomon, we have already seen, began to build the house of the Lord on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign. In the eleventh year in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, it was completed throughout according to all the fashion of it, that is with all its decorative work as detailed in the book of Kings\*. Thus the time, which is called roundly seven years†, was strictly speaking seven years and a half. The introduction of the molten sea, golden altar, and the vast variety of ornamental apparatus and vessels, which Hiram of Tyre was employed to make, appears to have occupied 11 months: for, when this was completed, Solomon assembled all Israel at the feast of the month Ethanim, which

\* 1 Kings vi.

† v. 38.



is the seventh month\*; and the priests brought the ark of the covenant into the oracle of the house; and the Dedication of the Temple was celebrated. The time of this dedication may be traced with a near approach to probable exactness. The established religious solemnities of this month (the first month of the ancient year, as reckoned from the Creation) were the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, the great day of Atonement on the 10th, and the feast of Tabernacles, which begun on the fifteenth day, and lasted seven days†. Now on comparing the accounts given in the Books of Kings and Chronicles we find, that the people were dismissed on the 23rd day, after having celebrated the feast of the Dedication and the feast of Tabernacles *severally* for *seven* days‡. Poole very appropriately remarks, that this seems “to intimate that these “14 days of rejoicing were not all together, but “that there was some interval between them, “which indeed was necessary, as the day of “Atonement was on the tenth day of this “month §.” The apparent inconsistency therefore of allowing the most solemn fast of the whole year to interrupt these seven days of rejoicing leads to the probable conclusion, that the feast of the Dedication was kept before the 10th day of the month, and must consequently

\* 1 Kings viii. 1.

† Leviticus xxiii. 24-36.

‡ 1 Kings viii. 65, 66; 2 Chronicles vii. 9, 10.

§ Poole's Annotations in loc. See also Bishop Patrick in loc.



have commenced on the second or third : neither must the apparent minuteness of this conclusion be considered as rendering it altogether void of interest ; for the more nearly the Dedication of the Temple is found to approach to the commencement of the month, the more striking becomes the great chronological fact which our previous calculations have at length fully enabled us to ascertain and recognise. The case may now be stated as follows :

|                                                              | Yrs. | Mths. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| From the Creation to the Foundation of Solomon's Temple. . . | 2991 | 7     |
| To the completion of the structure. . . . .                  | 7    | 6     |
| To its full preparation for Divine Service. . . . .          |      | 11    |
| Total from the Creation to the Dedication of the Temple. . . | 3000 |       |

It appears then that the Dedication occurring as it did at this critical juncture, was the solemn inauguration at once of the fourth Millennium of the World's duration, and of that magnificent temple which Solomon had "built for the name of the Lord God of Israel\*," the Lord himself vouchsafing the most undoubted tokens of his favour and acceptance by "the fire which came "down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the " Lord which filled the house †." In a coincidence so marvellous as this, accident is of course out of the question. It is either a fact in the scheme of God's Providence, the evidences of which are impressed on the sacred Records by the pen of

\* 1 Kings viii. 20.

† 2 Chron. vii. 1.



Inspiration, or else the semblance of such a fact artfully introduced by Millennarian theorists. But to whom shall we attribute the crafty interpolation? or can we even conceive an invention of the kind with no after-claim to its results? For if we may regard Josephus as a satisfactory exponent of the learning and in particular of the chronological opinions of the Jews in the age of our Saviour and those immediately preceding it, they had no suspicion whatever of the coincidence which we are considering. Indeed, not to mention several minor doubts already treated of, the important one regarding the age of Terah at Abraham's birth, and still more the *prima facie* impracticability of including the transactions of the Book of Judges within the prescribed limits, which led Josephus in a manner to ignore the "four hundred and eightieth year" of the Book of Kings\*, appear quite sufficient to have kept it out of view. Nevertheless, that this number was actually found in the Hebrew text at the time of the Septuagint version, the version itself may well persuade us; for though the received edition has the "four hundred and fortieth year," yet other copies have the "four hundred and eightieth;" and the exceedingly close resemblance of "four hundredth" to "fortieth" in the Greek (τεσσαρακοσιοστῷ to τεσσαρακοστῷ) might readily have misled a hasty transcriber. Moreover the learned men of this age, though, as we have seen,

\* 1 Kings vi. 1.



far from indifferent to Millennarian coincidences, sought them in the longer Septuagint chronology, and threw the one before us more than ever out of the scale of computation. The Jews, it is true, when in the reign of Adrian they put forth their abbreviated scheme of chronology in the *Seder Olam Rabba* the recognised basis of the modern Jewish computations, having for their leading object (in refutation of the prevailing systems of the Christians) to shew that the Messiah was not yet come, did not overlook the advantage offered by the "four hundred and eightieth year" strictly interpreted, adopting however the earlier date of Abraham's birth\*. Even Jerome, whose Oriental learning led him to a due appreciation of the Hebrew Chronology, and who stood almost alone in supporting it against that of the Septuagint, appears to have failed in detecting the established error respecting Terah's age at Abraham's birth. Whatever may have been the actual facts of the case, Ussher at all events appears to have the credit of finally establishing the truth of the later date to general satisfaction; and henceforth the light began to dawn on that Millennary coincidence, which so far from having been the contrivance of designing men, seems even for a long course of ages to have escaped human detection, but which, if once successfully demonstrated, may occupy no unimportant place among the Evidences of Divine Revelation.

\* Cf. David Ganz Chronolog.; Hales, vol. i. p. 221, &c.



That the two grand Millennary coincidences claimed by Ussher and his followers have failed in securing the general acquiescence of inquiring minds, has been already observed : and I think with regard to the one in particular, which we are now considering, this failure has obviously arisen from the glaring inconsistencies, complications, and contradictions, into which the various disciples of this school have fallen in their efforts to include the transactions recorded between the Exodus and the Foundation of the Temple within the limits so accurately defined by Holy Writ, thus encouraging a general scepticism as to the practicability of the process and even as to the integrity of the inspired text itself. Here undoubtedly lies the main difficulty which we have had to encounter ; trusting however that at least the more patient and candid of my readers will have already agreed with me, that this difficulty is not wholly insurmountable, and that the transactions of this period are after all capable of a fair and consistent arrangement without trespassing against the express declarations of inspired Scripture, I am persuaded that they will embrace with ready conviction the marvellous result to which one other short and easy step in advance has now conducted us. And it may perhaps tend to confirm this impression to revert in thought to two or three instances, in which it was found necessary to come to a decision between the conflicting opinions of chronologers,



such as the dates of Arphaxad's birth, and of the call of Abraham; and to remember that such decision was adopted on the plain and undeniable evidences of Scripture in each case respectively, without the remotest reference to its bearing favourably or otherwise on the great chronological coincidence, which the error of a single year must have effectually overthrown. I am by no means indifferent even to the doubtful half year with regard to the season of the Creation, which under one alternative must have failed to give full satisfaction to those who duly appreciate the exactness demanded by Sacred chronology. Here too I feel confident that it will be admitted, that although a great preponderance of probability rather than actual demonstration was all that I could profess to claim, the arguments advanced were derived from facts and principles utterly unconnected with Millenary coincidences, although the hope was expressed, that such a coincidence as that to which we have now attained would eventually confirm and sanction the choice then made. Humbly trusting therefore, that by the Divine blessing on an implicit reliance upon the integrity of inspired Scripture, I may have been guided throughout from sound premises to a just conclusion, I venture to adopt the precise termination of the three first Millennia of the world as the basis of my future calculations.



## CHAPTER VI.

### FROM THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE TO ITS DESTRUCTION BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

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THIS period of time, the outline of which in continuation of the years in the series *Anno Mundi* it is far from difficult to compute with exactness on the same principle which we have hitherto found so safe a guide, requires nevertheless our attentive consideration owing to the general disposition of Chronologers to pursue a different course. For if they do not wholly overlook, they at least appear to underrate the important fact of Divine inspiration having once again granted a great inclusive number to measure an interval, the details of which we could not with sufficient accuracy calculate for ourselves.

The Prophet Ezekiel had been carried away captive with Jehoiachin, and in the fifth year and fourth month of that captivity, that is about seven years before the destruction of the city and temple, among other Divine visions and



commands receives the following\* : “ Thou also,  
“ son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before  
“ thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jeru-  
“ salem : and lay siege against it, and build a  
“ fort against it, and cast a mount against it ;  
“ set the camp also against it, and set battering  
“ rams against it round about. Moreover take  
“ thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a  
“ wall of iron between thee and the city : and  
“ set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged,  
“ and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall  
“ be a sign to the house of Israel. Lie thou also  
“ upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the  
“ house of Israel upon it : according to the num-  
“ ber of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou  
“ shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon  
“ thee the years of their iniquity, according to  
“ the number of the days, three hundred and  
“ ninety days : so shalt thou bear the iniquity of  
“ the house of Israel. And when thou hast ac-  
“ complished them, lie again on thy right side,  
“ and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house  
“ of Judah forty days : I have appointed thee  
“ each day for a year. Therefore thou shalt set  
“ thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and  
“ thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt  
“ prophesy against it. And, behold, I will lay  
“ bands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee  
“ from one side to another, till thou hast ended  
“ the days of thy siege.”

\* Ezekiel iv. 1—8.



Now without considering for the present the application of the 40 years to the iniquity of the house of Judah\*, or of the 390 days, as days, to the supposed duration of the blockade and siege of Jerusalem: it must be our immediate purpose to observe the application of the 390 days, as 390 years, to the course of Sacred Chronology. Let it not be urged that this period, being in part at least prophetic, is thus essentially distinguished from the two which have been already treated of. Unless we would set bounds to Omniscience itself, we cannot for a moment consider it less easy for Ezekiel, under the guidance of acknowledged inspiration, to define with chronological precision the obscure future, than for Moses under the same Divine guidance to fix the exact limits of the equally obscure, because long forgotten, past. All that can be required to bring this case for every practicable purpose to a parallel with the two others, is to shew, *first*, that the events, which mark its commencement and its close, are indicated with sufficient clearness, *next*, that we have no sufficient means of dating the intervening transactions with exactness and certainty, and lastly, that there is no difficulty in supposing them consistently arranged within the assigned limits.

In the first place Ezekiel's prophecy, compared with the sacred narrative, appears to leave no doubt as to the commencement and close of this

\* Vide ch. xi. p. 257.



period. I am not even aware that it is a matter of controversy, that whereas the prophetic numbers close with the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, they point for their commencement to the great “iniquity of “the house of Israel,” the revolt of the ten tribes, their desertion of the temple service, and their adoption of the idolatrous and schismatical worship, to which they were seduced by the crafty policy of Jeroboam, of whom above all others it is emphatically and repeatedly declared that “he made Israel to sin.”

The next point will be best illustrated by giving the names of the successive sovereigns of Judah with the length of their reigns annexed.

|            | Years. |                 | Years. Months. |
|------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|
|            |        | Brought forward | 222            |
| Rehoboam   | 17     | Jotham          | 16             |
| Abijam     | 3      | Ahaz            | 16             |
| Asa        | 41     | Hezekiah        | 29             |
| Jehosaphat | 25     | Manasseh        | 55             |
| Jehoram    | 8      | Amon            | 2              |
| Ahaziah    | 1      | Josiah          | 31             |
| Athaliah   | 6      | Jehoahaz        | 3              |
| Jehoash    | 40     | Jehoiakim       | 11             |
| Amaziah    | 29     | Jehoiachin      | 3              |
| Azariah    | 52     | Zedekiah        | 11             |
|            | 222    | Total           | 393 6          |

That these even years express the length of the several reigns without excess or defect, or that the true amount of the whole series can be arrived at without some additional information, no one can for a moment suppose. For such



information we naturally look to the narrative itself; and here some assistance at least is certainly to be found by a comparison with the parallel statements of the length of the Israelite reigns. But if this parallelism were more easy of adjustment than it will on trial be found, it is after a time unfortunately broken by interregna, and long before the reigns of Judah come to a close it ceases altogether. The hopelessness of attaining a secure and satisfactory conclusion with such precarious data seems obvious enough, and may be further illustrated by a few specimens taken almost at random from the schemes of those, who have preferred calculating this period for themselves.

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| Thus Des Vignolles makes the sum total ..... | 375 |
| Wells .....                                  | 385 |
| Ussher and Lloyd .....                       | 387 |
| Stackhouse .....                             | 388 |
| Bedford and Clinton .....                    | 389 |
| Calvisius .....                              | 391 |

One or two of these calculations are probably warped a little in deference to preconceived theories, though others are apparently the *bona fide* results of the cautious application of insufficient data. At all events I think we may fairly conclude, that even the casual arrival at the truth itself under such circumstances could not command that confident reliance on its precision and certainty, which can alone satisfy the demands of Sacred Chronology.



The last point will now present no difficulty at all. In consideration of the brief sovereignty of Rehoboam over the twelve Tribes, we may venture, though without assuming any minuteness of calculation, to cast off the fractional months, and suppose that 393 years stated in full amounted in fact in the 20 reigns to only 390. The possibility of this is of course undeniable; its probability is increased by the notorious tendency of round and even numbers rather to overstate than otherwise what they loosely represent, and its certainty may be counted absolute on the inspired authority which asserts it. It is not necessary any more than in the two other cases, that we should be able to assign to every transaction its precise date within the given limits, though a near approach to it might here perhaps be fairly anticipated: if the attempt however is to be made, it is better to defer it, till we are in possession of one or two advantages, to which our course has not yet conducted us, viz. an acquaintance with the series of Sabbatical years, and with the ordinary treatment of the months of the Jewish Calendar in Historical statements. As it is however, I trust that the claim of Ezekiel's 390 years to be relied on as the true measure of the interval which they appear to define has been satisfactorily shewn: and we may at once proceed to our chronological computation. Should however any doubt occur, as to whether these years are to be regarded as



full and complete, or to some extent incomplete and current, I would urge, that the very form of the typical prophecy itself appears sufficient to decide the question, for 390 days are given to represent 390 distinct years: and though commentators have reasonably suggested, that the prophet did not lie on his side through entire days, but merely exhibited himself thus as a sign to the people through certain portions of each day; yet assuredly no one would hence infer in one single instance any disproportionate application of the adopted type.

The plain course of the sacred narrative accords well with this view. At the dedication of the Temple it will have been observed that  $11\frac{1}{2}$  years of Solomon's reign had elapsed, and there remained  $28\frac{1}{2}$  years to complete his 40 years, which thus appear to have terminated in the spring. How nearly indeed this was the exact case is not a matter of importance, but the difference could have been but inconsiderable. For the rash misconduct of Rehoboam, the disgust of his subjects, the revolt of the ten tribes, and the crafty devices of Jeroboam, followed the death of Solomon in rapid succession, and evidently marked the advancing spring and summer. The precise date indeed of the result is not distinctly given, but the Jews have always observed a fast in memory of it on the 23rd day of the third month, i. e. about midsummer; and in such a matter as this the correctness of their tradition



will scarcely be questioned. At all events Jero-boam had so far matured his schismatical mea-sures, as to venture in the eighth month to order a feast as a substitute for the feast of Taber-nacles, and in the course of the preceding sum-mer or autumn he must have established his golden calves in Dan and Bethel, and selected his unholy priesthood from the lowest of the people. The day of Divine retribution is however dis-tinctly noticed, and corresponds well enough with the season at least of this marked iniquity of the house of Israel: for “On the seventh day of the fifth month,” that is in the 11th month of the ancient year, the Temple and houses of Jerusa-lem were burnt, and the walls of the city broken down round about\*.

The Chronological result will now stand as follows:—

|                                                                               | years. | months.  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------|
| From the Creation to the Dedication of the Temple                             | 3000   |          |
| Remainder of Solomon’s reign . . . . .                                        | 28     | 6 circ.  |
| To the Separation of Judah and Israel . . . . .                               | —      | 4 or 5   |
| To the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple<br>by Nebuchadnezzar . . . . . | 390    |          |
|                                                                               |        |          |
|                                                                               | 3418   | 10 or 11 |

In other words, the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar took place in the eleventh month of the year A. M. 3419.

It was at first, as may be imagined, somewhat discouraging to me to find, that Ussher, who pro-fessed to prove those Millennary coincidences, the

\* 2 Kings xxv. 8.



truth of which it was my object also to investigate, placed this event in the year of the world 3416; but it soon appeared that he, like many others, had been tempted by his subsequent calculation and theories to encroach on the integrity of Ezekiel's prophetic period, thus at once underrating a most important declaration, and deserting an indispensable principle. The fact is, we have now arrived at the precise point of demarcation between sacred and profane chronology, or rather between sacred chronology dependent on inspired evidence alone, and sacred chronology dependent in a great measure on human testimony. And the principle I would lay down is this, on no account whatever to allow the carefully ascertained certainty of the one to be interfered with by the comparative uncertainty of the other. Hence it follows, that if any ill success or inconsistency should seem to attend our efforts to identify the precise year before the vulgar Christian era with the year of the world 3419, the remedy must be sought in the revision of those after-calculations, and under no temptation whatever in disturbing this, which must henceforward be regarded as fixed and sacred.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ASTRONOMICAL CANON OF PTOLEMY, ITS AUTHORITY, CONSTRUCTION, AND APPLICATION.

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THE computation of time by Julian years from the vulgar Christian era has been so long and so universally adopted as the basis of Chronological calculations, that any attempt to deviate from it could only lead to confusion and obscurity. Our next step therefore must be to ascertain with every possible exactness the precise year in the ordinary series B. C. which corresponds with the year A. M. 3419, already established as that of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. Inspired evidence about this period fails us in part, but the general evidence of chronologers appears to point, and with the best reason, to the Canon of the celebrated Ptolemy of Pelusium as its most trustworthy substitute, traced as it is from the critically ascertained era of Nabonassar, and verified throughout by astronomical observations. It appears to have been known, though in a corrupt form, to Syncellus and other early chronologers; but the first



correct edition of it was published by Calvisius in his *Opus Chronologicum*, A. D. 1613, from a copy sent him by Overall, Dean of St. Paul's, transcribed from one which he had found annexed to a manuscript of Ptolemy's *Astronomy*\*. And not long afterwards Petavius published at the end of his *Rationarium Temporum* a second edition taken from a manuscript of Theon's *Commentary on Ptolemy*, and collated with another Manuscript found in the Royal Library at Paris. These last vary from the copy of Calvisius merely in the spelling of some of the names†. This strong evidence of their correct correspondence with Ptolemy's original scheme is confirmed by Jackson in his *Chronological Antiquities*, who makes numerous references to Ptolemy's *Almagest* for the amount of years intervening between various reigns noted in his *Canon*: as, from the reign of Nabonassar to the 7th of Philomator 574 years: from the 2nd of Merdok Empad to the 19th of Adrian 854 years: from the reign of Nabonassar to the 1st of Trajan 845 years: and many other examples agreeing exactly with these copies, and satisfactorily shewing, that we still possess this invaluable Canon, as Ptolemy himself bequeathed it to posterity‡. It was adapted to the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, com-

\* Calvisii *Opus Chronologicum*, p. 78, edit. 1685.

† See these variations in the margin of Petavius's copy. Petavius, *Introduction and sub finem*. edit. 1700.

‡ Jackson's *Chronological Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 448, 450.



mencing precisely Feb. 26, B. C. 747 ; the year employed being the moveable Egyptian year of 365 days, and the Thoth or first day of the year, through the omission of the odd six hours, receding one day in 4 years fell in this particular year on the day just stated.

Whether Ptolemy was the author of the whole Canon from Nabonassar to Antoninus Pius, may be reasonably questioned. Its division into two parts at the reign of Alexander seems to point to an earlier author of the first, and conjecture has sometimes fallen on Berosus, but it is mere conjecture. The use of the Egyptian year seems to imply the hand of Ptolemy, but it is perhaps quite sufficient to suppose, that he adapted and verified the calculations and astronomical observations of the early Chaldean Chronologers, and arranged their schemes conformably with his own undoubted work.

The original copies of the Canon contained only the names of the kings, the years of their reigns, and the collected years counted from the era of Nabonassar. The corresponding years of the vulgar Christian era are now always added ; and I annex the gradual variation of the Thoth, as affording the best key to those intricacies in the construction of the Canon, which for a time baffled the penetration of some of our leading chronologers.



| Chaldean kings.                                  | Reign. | Col-<br>lected<br>years. | Thoth.   | B. C. |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|----------|-------|
| Nabonassar .....                                 | 14     | 14                       | Feb. 26  | 747   |
| Nadius .....                                     | 2      | 16                       | 23       | 733   |
| Cinzerus and Porus .....                         | 5      | 21                       | 22       | 731   |
| Jugæus .....                                     | 5      | 26                       | 21       | 726   |
| Mardokempad (Merodach Baladan) ..                | 12     | 38                       | 20       | 721   |
| Archian .....                                    | 5      | 43                       | 17       | 709   |
| Interregnum I. ....                              | 2      | 45                       | 15       | 704   |
| Belibus .....                                    | 3      | 48                       | 15       | 702   |
| Apronadius .....                                 | 6      | 54                       | 14       | 699   |
| Regibelus .....                                  | 1      | 55                       | 13       | 693   |
| Mesesse-mordaces .....                           | 4      | 59                       | 12       | 692   |
| Interregnum II. ....                             | 8      | 67                       | 11       | 688   |
| Assaradin (Esarhaddon) .....                     | 13     | 80                       | 9        | 680   |
| Saosduchinus .....                               | 20     | 100                      | 6        | 667   |
| Chyniladanus (Nabuchodonosor of<br>Judith) ..... | 22     | 122                      | 1        | 647   |
| Nabopolassar (Nabuchodonosor of<br>Tobit) .....  | 21     | 143                      | Jan. 27  | 625   |
| Nabocalassar (Nebuchadnezzar) ....               | 43     | 186                      | 21       | 604   |
| Ilvarodamus (Evil Merodach) .....                | 2      | 188                      | 11       | 561   |
| Niricassolassar .....                            | 4      | 192                      | 10       | 559   |
| Nabonadius (Belshazzar) .....                    | 17     | 209                      | 9        | 555   |
| Persian kings.                                   |        |                          |          |       |
| Cyrus .....                                      | 9      | 218                      | 5        | 538   |
| Cambyses .....                                   | 8      | 226                      | 3        | 529   |
| Darius I. ....                                   | 36     | 262                      | 1        | 521   |
| Xerxes .....                                     | 21     | 283                      | Dec. 22  | 486   |
| Artaxerxes I. ....                               | 41     | 324                      | 17       | 465   |
| Darius II. ....                                  | 19     | 343                      | 7        | 424   |
| Artaxerxes II. ....                              | 46     | 389                      | 2        | 405   |
| Ochus .....                                      | 21     | 410                      | Nov. 21  | 359   |
| Arogus .....                                     | 2      | 412                      | 16       | 338   |
| Darius III. ....                                 | 4      | 416                      | 15       | 336   |
| Alexander of Macedon .....                       | 8      | 424                      | 14       | 332   |
| Greek successors of Alexander.                   |        |                          |          |       |
| Philip Arideus .....                             | 7      | 7                        | 12       | 324   |
| Alexander Ægus .....                             | 12     | 19                       | 10       | 317   |
| Greek kings in Egypt.                            |        |                          |          |       |
| Ptolemy Lagus .....                              | 20     | 39                       | 7        | 305   |
| —— Philadelphus .....                            | 38     | 77                       | 2        | 285   |
| —— Euergetes I. ....                             | 25     | 102                      | Oct. 24  | 247   |
| —— Philopator .....                              | 17     | 119                      | 18       | 222   |
| —— Epiphanes .....                               | 24     | 143                      | 13       | 205   |
| —— Philometor .....                              | 35     | 178                      | 7        | 181   |
| —— Euergetes II. ....                            | 29     | 207                      | Sept. 29 | 146   |
| —— Soter .....                                   | 36     | 243                      | 21       | 117   |
| Dionysius .....                                  | 29     | 272                      | 12       | 81    |
| Cleopatra .....                                  | 22     | 292                      | 5        | 52    |



| Roman emperors.     | Reign. | Col-<br>lected<br>years. | Thoth.  |         |
|---------------------|--------|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Augustus .....      | 43     | 337                      | Aug. 31 | B.C. 30 |
| Tiberius .....      | 22     | 359                      | 20      | A.D. 14 |
| Caius .....         | 4      | 363                      | 14      | 36      |
| Claudius.....       | 14     | 377                      | 13      | 40      |
| Nero .....          | 14     | 391                      | 10      | 54      |
| Vespasian .....     | 10     | 401                      | 6       | 68      |
| Titus .....         | 3      | 404                      | 4       | 78      |
| Domitian .....      | 15     | 419                      | 3       | 81      |
| Nerva.....          | 1      | 420                      | July 30 | 96      |
| Trajan .....        | 19     | 439                      | 30      | 97      |
| Adrian .....        | 21     | 460                      | 25      | 116     |
| Antoninus Pius..... | 23     | 483                      | 20      | 137     |

It is impossible not to be struck at the first glance by the extreme obscurity and apparent insignificance of the early Babylonian names.—They were however obviously but the vassals or tributaries of the principal Assyrian monarchs; the only exception, which Scripture introduces to our notice, being Merdoch Empad or Merodach Baladan\*, who should seem to have procured for Babylon owing to the disasters of Sennacherib's reign a temporary but unsettled independence. Esarhaddon and his successors mark the recovery of Assyrian supremacy, till the successful rebellion of Nabopolassar and eventually the destruction of Nineveh established the Babylonian empire properly so called. Astronomy and its kindred sciences however being of Chaldean growth, it was natural that a Chronological scheme based on these principles should commence with a Babylonian reign, and be framed on a Babylonian

\* 2 Kings xx. 12.



succession. And assuredly neither the obscure names nor the still more obscure interregna need disturb our confidence in its trustworthy accuracy, or cause us to doubt that the collected Egyptian years from the critically defined era of Nabonassar were as carefully noted in these earlier instances as in those later reigns, which are more open to historical investigation.

The great difficulty with chronologers for some time was to comprehend the system and construction of the Canon itself. Petavius, though so happily the editor of a correct edition of it, considered Ptolemy to have lost one year in dating the reigns of the Roman emperors after Caligula\*. Dodwell appears to have been the first who mastered the system by bringing it into close comparison with the well ascertained dates of the early Roman emperors. His explanation is not perhaps quite so lucid as it might have been, but he certainly understood the construction of the Canon†. So also in the main did Des Vignolles, who laid down certain rules for its application, derived from a comparison with the reigns of several Persian kings‡.

By far the most hopeful way of clearing this intricate question to the apprehension of my

\* Petavius *Rationarium Temporum*. pt. ii. lib. iv. cap. vi. p. 212.

† Appendix to *Dissertationes Cyprianicæ*, pp. 15, 16. edit. 1682.

‡ *Chronologie de Hist. Sainte*. tom. ii. lib. v. cap. ii. pp. 358, 359, &c. Berlin, 1738.



readers appears to be the introduction in a tabular form of a comparative view of the reigns of some of the early Roman emperors, as historically dated, and as laid down in the Canon:—

|              | Accession explained as it took place historically.                                                                                                             | Accession by Canon from the Thoth. | Year of reign by Canon. |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Augustus     | on death of Cleopatra, abt. Sept. B. C. 30                                                                                                                     | Aug. 31. B.C. 30                   | 43                      |
| Tiberius .   | on death of Augustus, Aug. 19. A. D. 14                                                                                                                        | Aug. 20. A.D. 14                   | 22                      |
| Caius . . .  | on death of Tiberius, Mar. 16 . . — 37                                                                                                                         | Aug. 14. — 36                      | 4                       |
| Claudius.    | on death of Caius, Jan. 24. . . . . — 41                                                                                                                       | Aug. 13. — 40                      | 14                      |
| Nero. . . .  | on death of Claudius, Oct. 13 . . — 54                                                                                                                         | Aug. 10. — 54                      | 14                      |
| Vespasian    | <div> <div>Nero died June 9, A. D. 68.</div> <div>Galba, Otho, and Vitellius occupy 13½ months, to the proclamation of Vespasian, July 1. . . . .</div> </div> | Aug. 6. . — 68                     | 10                      |
| Titus . . .  | on death of Vespasian, June 24. — 79                                                                                                                           | Aug. 4. . — 78                     | 3                       |
| Domitian . . | on death of Titus, Sept. 13. . . . . — 81                                                                                                                      | Aug. 3. . — 81                     | 15                      |
| Nerva. . .   | on death of Domitian, Sept. 18. . — 96                                                                                                                         | July 30. — 96                      | 1                       |
| Trajan . .   | on death of Nerva, Jan. 27. . . . . — 98                                                                                                                       | July 30. — 97                      | —                       |

A brief inspection of this scheme will supply us with the principles on which the Canon was constructed:—

Rule I. The reigns are made to consist of complete Egyptian years of 365 days reckoned from Thoth to Thoth.

Rule II. Every reign is supposed to commence at the Thoth preceding the actual accession, though the interval may amount to many months. Thus the reign of Caius falls back seven months into that of Tiberius; and the reign of Titus more than ten months into that of Vespasian.

Rule III. Kings who reigned less than a year are unnoticed by name, but the time which they



occupied is divided between the predecessor and successor at the Thoth, if it include one; if otherwise it must belong wholly to the successor by Rule II. Thus the short reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, amounting together to about thirteen months, are unnoticed by name; and the Thoth falls at such a time as to give about two months to Nero, and eleven to Vespasian.

That short reigns including no Thoth must be assigned wholly to the succeeding reign, though Des Vignolles is less clear on this point than he might have been, there can be no question whatever. For the succeeding reign cannot possibly fall back to the preceding Thoth, as Rule II. requires, without passing over and therefore including them. Instances of this might very probably be traced, if required, in one or two instances of the short unnoticed Persian reigns, such as those of Smerdis, Artabanas, and others.

Having thus it is hoped mastered the rules which were observed in the construction of the Canon, let us consider their application to the times more immediately connected with our present chronological inquiry. In the first place, during the reigns from Nebuchadnezzar to Cambyzes inclusive the Thoth, being in January, makes so near an approach to the beginning of the Julian year, that it becomes all but certain, that these reigns commenced in the Julian years which stand opposite to their names. In the next place however, the retrogression of the



Thoths, having brought two of them, viz. on Jan. 1st and Dec. 31st, into the first year of Darius the son of Hystaspes, and the series of Thoths now beginning to recede through December, it becomes nearly certain, that the succeeding kings for some time to come commenced their reign in the Julian year after that, which the date in the Canon indicates. Hence some chronologers have adopted the plan of deducting an unit from the years in their tabular scheme from this point, thus producing what have been called *conumerary years*, as corresponding more correctly with the years of actual accession; and others, more prudently declining to confuse the regularity of the Canon, have placed the conumerary years in a separate column. Their utility however is, on the whole, very questionable; at all events, their correct application becomes less and less certain in proportion as the Thoths recede into the previous year; and, after a time, they must occasion far more confusion than they can remedy. For if we revert to the tables of the Roman emperors, in whose time the Thoths had receded to August and July, we shall perceive that the Julian year, to which the Canon guides us, has become once more, in almost half the cases, the true year of the accession.

It is therefore more advisable not to tamper with the Canon at all; but having thoroughly mastered its system, to be careful in the first place to confine the date, which we seek, within



the scope which the Canon actually gives us, and then to reduce it to greater precision by such aid as collateral history may afford. Thus beginning with the case which is now of paramount interest to us, we perceive that the Canon dates the first year of Nebuchadnezzar from the Thoth Jan. 21st, B. C. 604; and that this early Thoth makes it almost certain that his first year, as reckoned from his accession, coincides more or less with the same year B. C. 604, and by consequence that his 19th year, the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, coincided more or less with the year B. C. 586. The extent of this coincidence must be sought from collateral, especially scriptural, evidence, the investigation of which must be left for another chapter. I will however at once notice a fact, with which we are already familiar, that the Temple was burnt on the ninth of Ab, which answers in the main to the month of August; and divides the year so as to make it more probable, that the anniversary of Nebuchadnezzar's accession fell before it than after it, and thus that the destruction of the Temple happened in B. C. 586. Certainly the rules of the Canon do not absolutely forbid an accession towards the close of the year B. C. 604, in which case his first year might have coincided for the most part with B. C. 603, and his 19th year (including the destruction of the Temple) with B. C. 585. But we may spare ourselves the immediate investigation of what is thus remotely



possible, because it would involve the unavoidable objection of leaving less than 70 years for the Captivity. The detailed particulars of this objection would interrupt us at present, but will appear as we proceed: suffice it to say, that it is obvious that the majority of chronologers seem not to have thought themselves clear of it, till they had forced back the date of the destruction of Jerusalem to B. C. 588. For this most inconsistent desertion of their professedly recognised guide, the ordinary plea has been, that the Babylonian and Jewish computations differ by two years\*! It would be singular indeed if they did so. The Jews of the captivity were as likely to know when Nebuchadnezzar began to reign, as the Babylonians themselves. And I am confident that it will be found, that the notices of Scripture, rightly understood and compared with each other, offer no contradiction whatever to the Cardinal date of B. C. 586, which is now on the authority of Ptolemy's Canon adopted for the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and of course claimed as identical to the extent of nine months out of the twelve with the year 3419, already established as the date of that event in the series "Anno Mundi."

If the decided adoption of this date appears at present, as no doubt it must, to overstep in some degree the evidence of complete demonstration, I would observe, that this or some other fixed basis

\* Cf. Mant's note on Jeremiah xxv. 1.



of calculation has now become necessary, and with this partial reserve, as in the case of the season of the Creation, I am content to leave its final confirmation to that consistency of result, which the minute examination and comparison of particulars, not as yet explained, has led me confidently to anticipate.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SEVENTY YEARS' CAPTIVITY.

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THE arrangement of the seventy years' Captivity remains to this day the opprobrium of Sacred Chronology.—Not one scheme amid the variety which presents itself is at all calculated to command our acquiescence. For so sweeping an assertion my apology must be, that there is not one which does not more or less controvert or evade the authority of Ptolemy's Canon, while some even venture to tamper with and interpolate it.

Now if on the grounds already explained, the Canon is to be adopted as our only guide in making the transition from Sacred to Profane Chronology, and may even, as I confidently hold, be deemed a precious boon vouchsafed to us by a gracious Providence for that special purpose, true consistency assuredly requires not only that, on the failure of the chronological notices of inspiration, we should rely implicitly on the Canon, but so long as both authorities run parallel to each other, as they do at the period now under discus-



sion, we should unhesitatingly anticipate their harmonious correspondence. And I would add, that should first appearances disappoint us in this respect, we ought rather to attribute this to our own want of care or sagacity in detecting the parallelism, than impatiently venture to pronounce an adjustment hopeless; for this would be in effect to withdraw our full confidence from the Canon on all future occasions.

But, besides this want of implicit reliance on the authority of the Canon, another source of confusion and failure is to be found in the imprudence of those, who have ventured to arrange the details of the Captivity without having previously mastered the system adopted by the Sacred Historians in stating the years and months of the reigns of the kings of Judah. A few necessary cautions on this head should be carefully attended to.

1st. The years of the reigns are invariably stated in round numbers, which must therefore usually differ in some degree from their actual amount, though such difference cannot in any case be supposed to go beyond half a year of excess or defect.

2nd. That the years are generally computed from Nisan, and by months numerically named with reference to Nisan.

3rd. That nevertheless the actual beginnings and endings of these reigns are by no means lost sight of, but that the earlier and later years are



brought to the round numbers, at which the reigns are stated, by accommodating them exactly to such beginnings and endings; whence it follows, that the months, though still numerically named as before, have no numerical reference whatever to those years, though in close connexion with them.

4th. That this accommodation being carried further into the reigns by some writers than by others produces occasionally an apparent contradiction easily reconciled, when the cause of it is thus understood; and in fact even affording the advantage of limiting the season of certain events more precisely than would otherwise have been practicable.

The absolute necessity of these cautions will be obvious enough, when we come to the consideration of the cases to which they apply. In fact the neglect of them can only result, as it has often resulted, in hopeless confusion. Our first care must be to ascertain the exact duration of the reigns of the kings of Judah, from the death of Josiah to the destruction of Jerusalem. For till this basis is securely laid down beyond contradiction or doubt, we cannot safely attempt the adjustment of the successive years of these kings with those of Nebuchadnezzar, as derived from the Canon, or even fix with confidence the commencement of the Captivity. Our calculation naturally depends on the cardinal date of the destruction of Jerusalem in the 19th of Nebu-



chadnezzar, which has been already identified on the authority of the Canon with the year B. C. 586, and it will be most conveniently carried backwards through the reigns in question.

To begin then with the reign of Zedekiah, which is stated in round numbers at 11 years; but which some chronologers have considered to fall short of that amount, unaware apparently of the method adopted in the arrangement of the earlier and later years of reigns, which has just been explained, and interpreting the expressions “the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed &c.\*” to imply that he only reached the fourth month of his eleventh year. Now the deposition and captivity of Jeconias, and the accession of Zedekiah obviously took place together, and in the spring, for it was “at the return of the year,” or “when the year was expired†;” and it was three months and ten days after the death of his father Jehoiakim, which occurred in the winter season, for his body was “cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost‡.”

Zedekiah's reign therefore beginning in the spring and terminating in the fourth month, viz. about July or August, must have lasted either ten years and perhaps about three months, or eleven years and about three months; and this

\* 2 Kings xxv. 2, 3.

† 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 10.

‡ Jeremiah xxxvi. 30.



by itself might seem sufficient to decide the question in favour of the longer calculation, since it is unreasonable, as already observed, to suppose a whole year to be represented by less than six months; but the odd months in this case could not possibly have exceeded four, and were probably some weeks less. Again, it was in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar that he deposed Jeconias\*; and in his nineteenth that Zedekiah was taken and Jerusalem destroyed†; which completes the eleven years supposed. Again, Jeremiah prophesied “unto the *end* of the eleventh “year of Zedekiah‡,” which implies complete years as before. Again, Ezekiel computes his dates from the captivity of Jeconias, in exact coincidence therefore with the reign of Zedekiah, of which one clear proof is sufficient, viz. that whereas the Book of Kings§ and Jeremiah||, state that it was in the ninth year of Zedekiah’s reign, the tenth month, and the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem to besiege it; Ezekiel, by “the word of the Lord,” names the same year, month, and day, as that on which “the king of Babylon set himself against “Jerusalem¶.” Again, Ezekiel relates, “that “it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of “the month, that one that had escaped out of “Jerusalem came unto me saying, The city is

\* 2 Kings xxiv. 12.

† 2 Kings xxv. 8.

‡ Jer. i. 3.

§ 2 Kings xxv. 1.

|| Jer. xxxix. 1.

¶ Ezek. xxiv. 1.



“smitten\*.” Unless therefore we would maintain that this could have happened a year and four or five months after the destruction of Jerusalem, we must allow that Zedekiah ceased to reign in what would have been accounted his twelfth year, had he reigned a few months longer.

Once more, Ezekiel says, “In the five and twentieth year of our captivity in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was smitten†” &c. Here then is a clear interval of eleven years between the captivity of Jeconias and the destruction of the city. The same interval is also implied in the concluding chapter of Jeremiah in those enumerations of captives taken away in the 7th and 18th of Nebuchadnezzar‡; a chapter however not usually attributed to Jeremiah, but to Ezra perhaps, or some one else, who revised and arranged the sacred Canon after the captivity. It should at the same time be observed, that no doubt is thus cast, as some have imagined, on the facts of Jeconiah’s captivity in the 8th, or the taking of Jerusalem in the 19th of Nebuchadnezzar; for the 12th verse of the same chapter distinctly mentions the 19th of Nebuchadnezzar as the date of the latter event. The case plainly was, that as these captures of the city were both preceded by protracted blockades or sieges, the prisoners taken the pre-

\* Ezekiel xxxiii. 21.

† Ibid. xl. 1.

‡ Jeremiah lii. 28, 29.



vious year in sallies of the besieged or otherwise and sent off to Babylon are here stated. Indeed they are much fewer in number than those carried away in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar\*; viz., in the 7th 3023; in the 8th at least 18,000.

Jeremiah with reference to the renewal of the siege after its interruption by the advance of the Egyptians states, that the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem "in the 10th year of Zedekiah, "which was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar†;" and though at first sight this may seem to invalidate what has been said of the length of Zedekiah's reign, in reality it does no such thing, but is in fact a striking instance of what has been said of the method of accommodating the Jewish reigns to the round number of years assigned to them. For if Zedekiah's reign reckoned at 11 years terminated in the fourth month B.C. 586, the spring and summer of the preceding year up to that date must for consistency's sake be called his 10th year, though it was plainly his 11th reckoned in the ordinary way from Nisan, and as plainly Nebuchadnezzar's 18th.

There is abundant proof therefore, that Zedekiah's reign exceeded 11 years, and probably by about two or three months; that it commenced in the spring of Nebuchadnezzar's 8th year, (by the Canon B.C. 597) and terminated in the

\* 2 Kings xxiv. 12-16.

† Jeremiah xxxii. 1. 2.



summer of Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year (by the Canon B. C. 586).

The preceding reign of Jeconias, who was only king of the besieged city from the death of his father to the termination of the siege in his own surrender and captivity, lasted three months and ten days, occupying the close of the winter and the commencement of the spring of B. C. 597. That of Jehoiakim is stated at 11 years, in round numbers. The death of Josiah obviously occurred early in the spring of the year, for it was on the advance of Pharaoh Necho in his march towards the Euphrates, that he opposed him and was slain\*; Jehoahaz his successor reigned but three months, for Pharaoh, who appears to have succeeded in the object of his expedition, took the earliest opportunity of deposing him, and placing his brother Jehoiakim on the throne in his stead†. Jehoiakim's reign therefore commenced in the summer, and we have before concluded that it terminated in the winter, so that his 11 years must represent either about  $10\frac{1}{2}$  years or  $11\frac{1}{2}$  years.

In the first place, the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar and the subjection of Jehoiakim, in fact the commencement of the 70 years' Captivity, is placed by Daniel in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim‡; but by Jeremiah in his 4th §. These statements are readily reconciled, on the principle

\* 2 Kings xxiii. 29.

† Ibid. 34.

‡ Daniel i. 1.

§ Jeremiah xxv. 1.



already explained, by supposing, that his 3rd year reckoned from his accession in the summer was not yet completed, but that by the ordinary computation from the Jewish *Nisan* his 4th year had commenced. This latter computation therefore assigns but about nine months to his 1st year, and of course favours the supposition of a reign less than 11 full years. Moreover this comparison of the statements of Daniel and Jeremiah gives us the additional advantage of ascertaining that the season of Jehoiakim's 4th year, at which Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judæa, was somewhere between April and June or July. That we are in no error in supposing that the 4th year of Jehoiakim (thus reckoned from Nisan, and employing an imperfect first year) was the year of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, appears from another statement of Jeremiah; for when predicting very shortly before the invasion its result of 70 years' Captivity, (and very probably not long after the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish on the Euphrates, which he also places in the 4th year of Jehoiakim\*,) he says that this was the *three and twentieth* year from the *thirteenth* of Josiah†. The 13th of Josiah being the first year of the calculation, his 31st year was the 19th, the incomplete 1st year of Jehoiakim the 20th, and his 4th year the 23rd. Again, Ezekiel‡ calls the fifth year of the captivity of Jeconias also the 13th year; and from the

\* Jeremiah xlvi. 2.

† Ibid. xxv. 3.

‡ Ezekiel i. 12.



exactness of the coincidence, there is little reason to doubt that commentators are right in supposing that this 13th year is computed from the great reformation in the 18th of Josiah. Now the 18th of Josiah being the first year of the calculation, his 31st was the 14th, the incomplete 1st of Jehoiakim with the three months of Jehoahaz was the 15th, his incomplete 11th with a part of the reign of Jeconias the 30th. Should a doubt suggest itself as to whether the first year of this calculation is to be reckoned inclusively or exclusively, which would of course make a year's difference in the reign of Jehoiakim, we may satisfy it by observing the practice of Ezekiel in a case already adduced, where he speaks of "the five and twentieth year of our captivity being the fourteenth after the city was smitten;" for the well established 11 full years of Zedekiah would be unaccounted for, unless the year of the destruction of the city were taken inclusively as the first year of the series.

There appears therefore no reason to doubt, that the reign of Jehoiakim fell short of 11 years in the manner, which has been supposed. The deficiency however, which has been roundly stated at half a year would, I think, be found to have probably amounted more nearly to about five months, which might add one item more to the arguments already adduced.

We are now therefore in a condition to state with sufficient precision the time which elapsed



between the death of Josiah and the destruction of the city, and moreover to fix with confidence the important date of the commencement of the Captivity. Thus the city being destroyed, and Zedekiah's reign terminating, in the summer of B. C. 586, his reign began in the spring of B. C. 597; Jehoiakim's incomplete 11th was B. C. 598, his incomplete 1st commenced in the summer of B. C. 608, the death of Josiah marking the spring of the same year; whence it follows that Jehoiakim's 4th year, which was marked by Nebuchadnezzar's invasion and the commencement of the Captivity, was B. C. 605.

Should it appear to any of my readers, well aware of the generally and (I believe we shall find) the justly admitted fact of the close of the Captivity in the first year of the sole reign of Cyrus B. C. 536, that the Captivity is thus limited to 69 years, with a 70th year but partially current; I must observe that having arrived at the date B. C. 605 by a careful process of investigation, of which I felt myself quite unable to question the result, I turned my thoughts to the following considerations, which I trust may prove as satisfactory to the judgment of others, as they were to my own.

In the first place, the subjection of 70 years to the king of Babylon was predicted not for Judah alone, but for all the neighbouring nations of Syria and Palestine, and for some state more remote\*, "These nations shall serve the king of

\* Jeremiah xxv. 18-26.



“Babylon 70 years\*.” This subjection evidently dates from the overthrow of the Egyptians at Carchemish, which happened early in the year B. C. 605, and was instantly followed by a desolating invasion sweeping the whole country from the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt; and the Jews do not appear to have settled themselves in their cities before the Autumn in the first year of Cyrus†.

Moreover one of the descriptions of the Captivity is, that “the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath‡.” Now the devastations of the invaders must have ruined the harvest of B. C. 605, and the Jews returned so late in B. C. 536, that they could only cultivate the lands in preparation for the harvest of the succeeding year; so that coupling these facts with the not uncommon practice in the sacred writings of reckoning current years as complete, I have persuaded myself, that this calculation really represents the predicted time more correctly than that which is usually adopted.

Having arrived at this conclusion I would observe, that we have thus not only the satisfaction of leaving the plain evidence of the Canon for the destruction of Jerusalem in B. C. 586 altogether unquestioned, but of detecting one leading temptation under which chronologers have fallen to evade and question it. For the general, I believe I may say almost universal, prejudice

\* Jer. xxv. 11.

† Ezra ii. 1.

‡ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.



in favour of the full 70 years would allow its determined advocates no room to arrange their scheme without forcing back the date of the destruction of the city at least one year, and should they at the same time have failed to master some of the ambiguous notices of time after the death of Josiah, they would perhaps appear to find their object still unaccomplished without venturing to trespass one year more in the same direction. In fact the great bulk of modern chronologers, including those whose systems are most resorted to as the best authority on the subject, have come to the conclusion, though with much variety in their process of calculation, that the true date of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar is B. C. 588.

That they should have framed to themselves excuses more or less plausible for this *prima facie* desertion of their generally recognised guide was of course to be expected. The validity of these excuses requires minute investigation, and for this we shall be the better prepared, if we begin by adverting to one or two points regarding the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, on which I believe all parties are agreed.

In the first place then it appears to be unquestionable, that when Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Judah and commenced the Captivity, though Jeremiah and Daniel both call him king of Babylon, he was only so as the associate of his father Nabopolassar. The well-known fragment of Be-



rosus preserved by Josephus\* satisfactorily explains this; it states in substance, that when Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in the wars with Egypt, Syria, and Phœnicia, the intelligence of his father's death reached him, on which leaving to some of his friends the charge of bringing to Babylon the Jewish, Phœnician, Syrian, and Egyptian captives with the heavy baggage, he himself with a few followers hastened the shortest way across the desert, and took possession of the sovereignty. Daniel accordingly informs us, that in the third year of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon captured Jerusalem, and that he was himself, with several other youths of royal extraction, delivered to Ashpenaz the master of the eunuchs, that they might be prepared by three years' training to stand before the king†; and that at the end of the days they were brought before the king‡. Then follows Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation of it, in the *second* year of his reign§. Now it is obvious, that Daniel is here distinguishing between his associated and his actual reign,—indeed fixing the date of the latter at least a year after that of his own captivity.

Thus far there appears no difference of opinion, but here all agreement ceases; for the great bulk of chronologers, though they admit that Daniel, as resident in Babylon, probably adopted the computation to which the Canon would naturally

\* Antiq. Jud. X. xi. 1. † Dan. i. 5. ‡ Ibid. 18. § Ibid. ii. 1, &c.



adapt the reigns of the Babylonian kings, most resolutely maintain, that the other Sacred writers continue throughout to antedate Nebuchadnezzar's reign in accordance with Jeremiah\*, who speaks of "the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." Now though it may have been natural enough both for Daniel and Jeremiah to have spoken of Nebuchadnezzar as king, appearing, as he did, in that character in the year of his invasion, there seems no sufficient reason why Jeremiah, any more than Daniel, should fail to correct the ambiguity on the first suitable occasion, the Jews of the Captivity being quite as likely to know when Nebuchadnezzar began to reign as the Babylonians themselves.

Still however, as there may appear some plausibility in the supposition, it requires to be tested by a minute comparison with the several other notices of the years of Nebuchadnezzar, which are brought to a parallel with those of the kings of Judah. And now, if my readers will steadily adhere to the bases already laid down in the carefully ascertained series of years which intervened between the death of Josiah and the destruction of the city, being at the same time well prepared to encounter certain ambiguities, which have been cleared and explained, and above all bringing with them no preconceived theory, which is too apt to rejoice in ambiguities, that it may

\* Jeremiah xxv. 1.



seize on the alternative, which best suits its own case, the solution of the question before us will, I apprehend, be found attended with little difficulty and no uncertainty at all. Thus the Book of Kings\*, and the supplementary chapter of Jeremiah†, place the destruction of the city and Temple in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar, being the 12th year of the captivity of Jeconias, and, as before explained, the actually commenced 12th also of Zedekiah. Jeremiah‡ represents Nebuchadnezzar as besieging Jerusalem for the last time in his 18th year. The Book of Kings§ assigns the captivity of Jeconias and the succession of Zedekiah to his 8th year. The previous year, viz. the imperfect 11th of Jehoiakim, was of course his 7th; indeed it is called so||, when the captives are enumerated, which were taken during the blockade, which preceded the death of Jehoiakim. Now the 7th of Nebuchadnezzar thus corresponding with the 11th of Jehoiakim, by inevitable consequence the 1st of Nebuchadnezzar corresponds with Jehoiakim's 5th; and it is no less manifest, that the other years of Nebuchadnezzar, which have just been cited, including those stated by Jeremiah himself, uniformly point to the same 5th year as the 1st of the series. We are thus in a position to maintain without hesitation or doubt, that the Scriptural dates of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar neither precede those of the Canon by two years,

\* 2 Kings xxv. 8.      † Jeremiah lii. 12.      ‡ Ibid. xxxii. 1.

§ 2 Kings xxiv. 12, &c.

|| Jeremiah lii. 28.



as generally maintained, nor even by one, as some few prefer, but are perfectly identical with them, and are capable of the most harmonious adjustment throughout. And now having already, as the author of the Canon assumed, the year B. C. 586 as that of the destruction of Jerusalem, we are enabled fully to compare and establish this important date by the clearly concurrent testimony of the Sacred Historian.

In thus finally laying claim to B. C. 586 as beyond all further question or controversy the year of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, it is no doubt somewhat startling to find oneself standing nearly alone, perhaps absolutely so, in opposition to the whole mass of chronologers, not indeed of harmonious views, but still a formidable host, including many names of high celebrity; and it may appear to savour of arrogance to dismiss them all thus uncere- moniously and indiscriminately. I am disposed therefore to place in parallel columns, with my own computation of the years from the death of Josiah to the destruction of Jerusalem, those of Ussher and Clinton; the first, because, as being for the most part the basis of our Bible Chronology, it possesses a kind of prescriptive authority, its claim to which should be better understood; the second, because it makes the nearest approach to the truth of any system which it has been my fortune to examine: moreover they both duly recognise the 22 full years of the interval in question:—



| CLINTON.                                                                 | USSHER.                                                                                                                                               | B.C. | CANON.                 | PRESUMED SCRIPTURE.                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                          | Josiah slain. Spring. }<br>Jehoiakim's accession. Summer.                                                                                             | 610  | 16th of Nabopolassar.  | 29th Josiah.                                                                                                                                           |
| Josiah slain. May. }<br>Jehoiakim's accession. Aug.                      |                                                                                                                                                       | 609  | 17th Nabopolassar.     | 30th Josiah.                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                       | 608  | 18th Nabopolassar.     | Josiah slain. Spring. Jehoiakim's acces. Summer.                                                                                                       |
|                                                                          | Nebuchadnezzar's expedition to Car-<br>chemish and Syria. Jeremiah fore-<br>tells 70 years' captivity. Summer.<br>Jehoiakim and Jerusalem taken. Dec. | 607  | 19th Nabopolassar.     | { 2nd of Jehoiakim by common reckoning from<br>Nisan.                                                                                                  |
| Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. }<br>Summer.<br>4th Jehoiakim, beginning Aug. | Roll burnt by Jehoiakim. Dec.                                                                                                                         | 606  | 20th Nabopolassar.     | 3rd Jehoiakim.                                                                                                                                         |
| 5th Jehoi., beginning Aug. }<br>Roll burnt Nov. or Dec.                  | Nebuchadnezzar's accession.                                                                                                                           | 605  | 21st Nabopolassar.     | { Carchemish. Spring.—70 yrs. begin.<br>Daniel's captivity before midsummer.<br>3rd of Jehoiakim's actual reign; but his<br>4th, reckoning from Nisan. |
|                                                                          | Jehoiakim rebels. Autumn. }<br>Nebuchadnezzar's dream. About the<br>end of the year.                                                                  | 604  | 1st of Nebuchadnezzar. | { Nebuchadnezzar succeeds his father. Spring.<br>Roll burnt. Dec.<br>5th Jehoiakim.                                                                    |
|                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                       | 603  | 2nd Nebuchadnezzar.    | 6th Jehoiakim.                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                       | 602  | 3rd Nebuchadnezzar.    | { Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Early in the year.<br>Jehoiakim rebels. 7th Jehoiakim.                                                                       |
|                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                       | 601  | 4th Nebuchadnezzar.    | 8th Jehoiakim.                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                          | Judæa wasted by bands.<br>(Called 7th of Nebuchadnezzar)                                                                                              | 600  | 5th Nebuchadnezzar.    | 9th Jehoiakim.                                                                                                                                         |
| 10th Jehoi. completed in Aug.                                            | { Jehoiakim cast out unburied. Spring.<br>Jeconiah taken. Summer. — 8th<br>Nebuchadnezzar nearly complete. }                                          | 599  | 6th Nebuchadnezzar.    | 10th Jehoiakim.                                                                                                                                        |



|                                                                                                                         |     |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jehoi. slain. Early in March.<br>Jeconiah captive. Zedekiah<br>reigns. June.—8th Neb.                                   | 598 | 7th Nebuchadnezzar.  | { 11th Jehoiakim.<br>Bands sent to ravage Judæa &c.<br>Jehoiakim slain. Winter 598, 7—<br>Jeconiah captive, Zedekiah's accession. Spring.<br>2nd Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>3rd Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>4th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>5th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>6th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>{ 7th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>Nebuchadnezzar decides by divination to at-<br>tack Judæa. |
|                                                                                                                         | 597 | 8th Nebuchadnezzar.  | { 8th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>Sabbatical year.<br>Bondslaves released.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                         | 596 | 9th Nebuchadnezzar.  | { 9th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>Siege began in winter.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Ezekiel's 30th year from 18th Josiah.<br>Jeconiah's 5th beginning July.                                                 | 595 | 10th Nebuchadnezzar. | { 10th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>Siege raised. Bondslaves resumed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                         | 594 | 11th Nebuchadnezzar. | { 11th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>Siege recommenced in the spring. Called 10th<br>Zedekiah with reference to his 11 yrs' reign.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                         | 593 | 12th Nebuchadnezzar. | { 12th Jeconiah captive, and Zedekiah's reign.<br>(Zedekiah reigned 11 yrs and 2 or 3 mths.)<br>Jerusalem taken. July.—Temple burnt. Aug.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                                                                         | 592 | 13th Nebuchadnezzar. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Sabbatical year begins. Autumn.<br>Bondslaves released.                                                                 | 591 | 14th Nebuchadnezzar. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Siege begins. Jan.<br>Jeremiah in prison. Summer.<br>(Called 10th Zed., 18th Neb.)<br>Siege raised. Bondslaves resumed. | 590 | 15th Nebuchadnezzar. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Siege recommenced. 390 days before<br>its completion.                                                                   | 589 | 16th Nebuchadnezzar. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| City taken. July.—11th Zed. complete.<br>Temple burnt. Aug. 19th Neb. ending.                                           | 588 | 17th Nebuchadnezzar. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Jerusalem taken. End of<br>June.<br>Temple burnt. End of Aug.                                                           | 587 | 18th Nebuchadnezzar. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                         | 586 | 19th Nebuchadnezzar. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |



| CLINTON.                                              | USSHER.                                                                                            | B.C. | CANON.                | PRESUMED SCRIPTURE.                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 37th of Jeconiah's captivity.<br>Beginning of June. } | Evil Merodach's accession. March.<br>Releases Jeconiah two days after 37th<br>year of captivity. } | 562  | 43rd Nebuchadnezzar.  | 36th Jeconiah captive.                                                  |
| Released by Evil Merodach<br>at end of Feb. }         | 2nd Evil Merodach.                                                                                 | 561  | 1st of Evil Merodach. | { 37th Jeconiah captive.<br>Evil Merodach's accession late in the year. |
|                                                       | 1st of Neriglissar.                                                                                | 560  | 2nd Evil Merodach.    | Jeconiah released in March.                                             |
|                                                       | 2nd Neriglissar.                                                                                   | 559  | 1st of Neriglissar.   |                                                                         |
|                                                       | 3rd Neriglissar.                                                                                   | 558  | 2nd Neriglissar.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       | 4th Neriglissar.                                                                                   | 557  | 3rd Neriglissar.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       | 5th Norig. (including Laborosoarchod.)                                                             | 556  | 4th Neriglissar.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       | 1st of Belshazzar.                                                                                 | 555  | 1st of Nabonadius.    |                                                                         |
|                                                       | 2nd Belshazzar.                                                                                    | 554  | 2nd Nabonadius.       |                                                                         |
|                                                       | 3rd Belshazzar.                                                                                    | 553  | 3rd Nabonadius.       |                                                                         |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    |      |                       |                                                                         |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    | 543  | 13th Nabonadius.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    | 542  | 14th Nabonadius.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    | 541  | 15th Nabonadius.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    | 540  | 16th Nabonadius.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    | 539  | 17th Nabonadius.      |                                                                         |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    | 538  | 1st of Cyrus.         | 1st Darius the Mede. Babylon taken.                                     |
|                                                       |                                                                                                    | 537  | 2nd Cyrus.            | 2nd Darius.                                                             |
| Jews restored.                                        | Jews restored.                                                                                     | 536  | 3rd Cyrus.            | 1st Cyrus alone. Jews restored.                                         |



It will readily be seen, that while all the three schemes terminate in the same year 536, I commence the captivity in 605, Clinton in 606, and Ussher in 607. In fact Ussher's captivity exceeds 70 years, and would be full 71, but for his dating it from the capture of Jerusalem, and placing that (contrary to plain evidence) at the extreme end of the year, and by supposing Cyrus' decree for restoring the Jews as early as possible in 536. In thus framing his scheme however he shews his want of confidence in the Canon, by which he professes to be guided, by interpolating a year for the reign of Laborosoarchod, whose nine months it includes in Nabonadius, and betrays his ignorance of its construction by placing Nebuchadnezzar's actual accession in 605, whereas by the established rule of the Canon it could not have preceded the Thoth Jan. 21. 604, and does precisely the same with the accession of Evil Merodach. Hence it is that he calculates, that the Jewish date of Nebuchadnezzar's reign precedes his true accession by one year and eight months, whereas his scheme really makes the difference two years and several months. He also assigns Jeremiah's imprisonment in the court of the prison to the portion of the siege, which preceded its temporary raising by the Egyptians, which nothing but a most unnatural straining of particulars could bring within the 10th of Zedekiah and 18th of Nebuchadnezzar, whereas it is clear that "they had not then put him into



“prison\*”, but that his attempt to quit the city in the interval of respite led to his being apprehended as a deserter to the Chaldeans, and imprisoned†.

Mr. Clinton however makes far more hopeful approximation to the truth, and is clear of many of the errors of the generality of chronologers. He perfectly understands the construction of the Canon, and ventures on no interpolation of it to support his theory; neither is he led like so many, by misapprehending the connexion between Jewish months and years, to shorten the reign of Zedekiah, but distinctly recognises more than 22 years between the death of Josiah and the destruction of Jerusalem. Still however he adheres to the established prejudice, that the Jewish reckoning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign anticipates his actual accession. His idea of its being necessary to place the commencement of the captivity in B. C. 606, would of course tend to this conclusion; but I have already given reasons for considering, that the early part of 605 answers the prophetic conditions and historical facts still better; and Mr. Clinton himself, though laying down the summer of 606 in his regular Table in his first volume‡ for Nebuchadnezzar's invasion, speaks afterwards, perhaps inadvertently, of 605 as the commencement of the captivity§.

\* Jer. xxvii. 4, 5, &c.

† cf. Jer. xxvii. 21. and xxxii. 1.

‡ Clinton, vol. i. Appendix, p. 328.

§ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 367.



Be this as it may however, he is certainly led into some confusion with regard to two successive Julian years, by imagining that the years of the Jewish kings are reckoned invariably from the date of their accession, whereas the most decisive proof of the contrary is to be found in the very case of Jehoiakim now before us. For instead of Jehoiakim's 4th, according to Jeremiah\*, succeeding his 3rd, as reckoned by Daniel†, and therefore, as Mr. Clinton supposes, dating from about August, and together with the Jewish 1st of Nebuchadnezzar, and the 1st of the captivity, Jeremiah and Daniel are certainly both speaking of the same year, and the same season of the year, viz. spring and early summer, the one calling it the 4th year according to the ordinary reckoning from Nisan, the other the 3rd year with reference no doubt to Jehoiakim's accession‡. Nay more, the strict point of time referred to in Jeremiah even precedes that in Daniel; for Daniel speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's coming to Jerusalem, and besieging it, whereas Jeremiah is speaking prophetically of the approaching invasion which was not yet known in Jerusalem; and besides he afterwards speaks§ of the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish as having occurred in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. Now this blow must have been struck at the

\* Jer. xxv. 1, &c.      † Dan. i. 1.      ‡ Clinton, note, vol. ii.  
Appendix, p. 366, and Table, vol. i. p. 328.      § Jer. xlvii. 2.



outset of the expedition in the spring, at a time perhaps nearly corresponding with this prophecy, with regard to which it is said that "the word" came to Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon." In fact this text, relied on by Mr. Clinton and so many others as the one basis of the Scriptural calculation of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, is most unfortunately selected for the purpose, for it cannot without miscalculation or forced construction be made consistent with the seven other texts, where the year of his reign is specified.

Without repeating the details of these years already given, or insisting for the moment on the particular year B. C. which corresponds with the destruction of Jerusalem, I would only say, call this year Nebuchadnezzar's 19th, and his 1st year, instead of corresponding with the year of the invasion and Jehoiakim's 4th, falls undeniably on his 5th. The attempt to solve the difficulty, and draw the two extremes together by the wholly gratuitous supposition of the burning of the Temple marking the very end of Nebuchadnezzar's 19th, and thus throwing his accession as far back as August in the year of the invasion, falls short of its object, for it still leaves the bulk of Nebuchadnezzar's 1st in the same Julian year as before; and be it observed that it is by Julian years that we now count by general consent, and that great care should be taken not to confuse



the series by any such a process as the one now adverted to.

Again supposing this last objection to be less decisive than it really is, and that it were urged in defence of adopting August as the time of Nebuchadnezzar's accession, that when Jeremiah speaks of the 4th of Jehoiakim, "which was "the first of Nebuchadnezzar," he need only intend a partial coincidence between these years, and that consequently Nebuchadnezzar's 1st may have commenced much later than Jehoiakim's 4th, and consistently enough in August or afterwards, this would be in effect giving up the chosen authority of Jeremiah for the presumed Scriptural anticipation of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; for since Jehoiakim's 4th ran three months into the next Julian year, it might on the self-same principle be claimed as partially coincident with the early part of Nebuchadnezzar's 1st as reckoned from the subsequent notices of Scripture. In short, this argument, instead of proving the consistency of the after-dates with the assumed basis of Jeremiah, would be dragging Jeremiah's basis into a forced consistency with the after-dates, and far away from its natural position in the year and actual season of the invasion. While it is readily admitted, that such synchronisms as the one in question do not necessarily or even ordinarily imply more than a partial coincidence between the years named, yet at least this coincidence must be



held to exist at the point of time which the synchronism is employed to illustrate. Thus at the time when the word of prophecy came to Jeremiah, the 4th of Jehoiakim and the 1st of Nebuchadnezzar, as reckoned by him, were at all events both current. The season of the prophecy was, as we have seen, undoubtedly the spring; Jehoiakim's 4th therefore, as reckoned from Nisan, was just commencing: the same might very probably be the case with Nebuchadnezzar's, or it might perhaps be referred by Jeremiah to some commission from his father of an earlier date; but in either case it is too far removed from the Julian year succeeding that of the invasion to allow of any identification or confusion with it.

Once more, in order to set the argument if possible in a still stronger light, and setting aside at the same time the improbability of August being the time of the capture of Jerusalem and Daniel's deportation, (and still less December as suggested by Ussher, since Daniel places these events within the third of Jehoiakim, very likely about midsummer, or even earlier,) and passing by their obvious adoption in each scheme respectively to satisfy the requirements of a preconceived theory, let common sense judge of the unreasonableness or rather impossibility of any such era being assigned by the sacred writers to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. If they considered him (as Daniel and Jeremiah seem to



have done) as in some sense king of Babylon, when he overran Syria and Judæa, they must have supposed him to leave Babylon invested with such dignity, not that any particular event of the campaign conferred it on him, even though that event might be (as some have devised) the capture of Jerusalem; for be it observed, they were not speaking of a king of Judah recovering Jerusalem from an usurper and naturally enough dating his reign from this success, but of a king of a distant country, and of his reign as king of that country. Here then is another convincing proof of the impracticability of making Jeremiah's a secure basis for the after-calculations of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and of establishing the year of the invasion as the 1st of that series of which the 19th is marked by the destruction of Jerusalem.

I have dwelt the longer on the various proofs of the undeniable difference of one year between the calculations derivable from Jeremiah's 1st of Nebuchadnezzar, and the after-notice of years of his reign on account of the important conclusion which follows from the fact when duly ascertained. For, to reiterate the argument as already advanced, if Daniel and Jeremiah, after once denoting Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon when he invaded Judah in the lifetime of his father, nevertheless concur afterwards with every other sacred authority in dating his reign from the year following, to what can this *altered* computa-



tion refer, but to his actual accession on his father's death? No one is so unreasonable as to question this in the case of Daniel, and as I now claim to have clearly shown the same distinction between the first and finally adopted dates of the other sacred writers, it is beyond question that they also date his reign from his actual accession. Nay more, the obvious independence of the statements of Daniel and the other writers, and their unpremeditated concurrence, adds much to the force of that evidence, which makes it demonstrably certain, that the Scriptural computation of Nebuchadnezzar's reign does not anticipate his actual reign, but is strictly identical with it. We are now therefore in a condition to maintain without fear of contradiction that the 19th of Nebuchadnezzar, the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, may on the authority of Ptolemy's Canon be safely identified with the year B. C. 586. We are thus enabled finally to rivet at once the most disputed and the most important link in the chain of Ancient Chronology, that which unites the sacred with the profane.

Before I proceed to the later years of the captivity, I must advert to one chronological statement, which has been by many, and among them by Mr. Clinton himself, incautiously admitted as an important element in these calculations, and by some even as their basis, though its extreme ambiguity ought in all reason to have forbidden



such an adoption of it. I allude to the account of the release of Jeconias by Evil Merodach\*. And certainly, if it is at once taken for granted, that the 1st of Evil Merodach is throughout concurrent with B.C. 561, and that the 12th month of the 37th of Jeconiah's captivity marks the extreme end of such year, and that this release was an act of grace immediately on his accession, not one of which points can be assumed as certain, the 37th year of Jeconias is thrown back on B.C. 562, and the commencement of his captivity, and the whole scheme of dates dependent on it, one year earlier than I have, as I trust, securely placed them. Now firstly, all that the rules of the Canon require is, that Evil Merodach should have begun to reign between the 10th of January of the year named and the 10th of January of the next year, so that the chances are *cæteris paribus* six to one against its having commenced early enough for the hypothesis. In the next place, there is no Scriptural authority whatever for this immediate act of grace. The release took place in the 1st year of his reign, or in the year that he began to reign. The *ἐνθὺς*† of Josephus is an unauthorized flourish of his own resembling his habitual embellishment of plain Scripture. And Ussher's idea of its taking place in exactly two days, because by a various reading the Book of Kings names the 27th day of the 12th month, and Jere-

\* Jer. lii. 31. and 2 Kings xxv. 27.

† Antiq. Jud. X. xi. 2.



miah's Supplementary Chapter the 25th, seems particularly absurd.

It seems quite sufficient to suppose that Evil Merodach succeeded his father in the course of this year, and after a few months released Jeconiah: and those who prefer his earlier release of Jeconiah may, without trespassing on the rules of the Canon, bring the accession to within about two months of the ensuing 25th day of the 12th month: nay, though I do not propose it as a suitable solution, I am not even aware that there would be any necessary contradiction to facts in the supposition. Nay more, as the captivity of Jeconias commenced in the spring, it might perhaps (especially if coupled with a suitable state of the moveable passover) even have preceded the first of Nisan; so when the years of his captivity were reckoned, as they no doubt would be, from the mournful anniversary, the latter part of the 12th month would be the beginning not the extreme end of his 37th year, and then an early accession of Evil Merodach would leave the immediate act of grace. I do not propose this as the preferable or even very probable solution, but as offering no necessary contradiction to established facts; but I would merely urge the imprudence of basing any chronological computation on the uncertain foundation of such an ambiguous text as this, or of allowing any meaning derived from a *prima facie* view of it to create a prejudice against what of itself is clear and consistent.



In proceeding to the consideration of the remaining years of the captivity, I would observe that having once established B.C. 586 as the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, and by necessary consequence B.C. 605 as the 1st year of the captivity, we are enabled to pronounce B.C. 536 to be the 70th, or last year of it, independently of the other arguments, which have led chronologers all but unanimously to the same conclusion.

We have no immediate occasion to trace the successors of Nebuchadnezzar step by step, but to observe how the year B.C. 536 stands with the Canon. And it should seem that some have been staggered at finding B.C. 538 the 1st year of Cyrus, and even have recourse to interpolation and corruption of the Canon to solve the supposed difficulty. To say nothing of those who, in order to make the 1st of Cyrus by the Canon the 1st of his actual reign over Persia, a reign that is of 29 or 30 years, have corrupted the Canon so enormously as to leave all adaptation with the Jewish captivity out of the question; it is sufficient to notice those, who like Scaliger, Jackson, and Hales, being at a loss to recognise the subordinate reign of Darius the Mede as included in that of Cyrus, have been led to interpolate two years in order to obtain the required coincidence between the 1st of Cyrus and the close of the captivity. It is true indeed, that the accounts of this period in profane historians are most singu-



larly perplexed and conflicting; but it is obvious to remark of these chronologers, that even had they been destitute of the guidance of Scripture, their preference of the statements of Berosus and Megasthenes to those of Herodotus and Xenophon (who lived much nearer to the time of these transactions) would have been at all events injudicious. Having however on their authority been led to suppose, that Nabonadius the last Babylonian king did not belong to the family of Nebuchadnezzar, and, instead of being slain when Cyrus took Babylon, was spared, and made governor of Carmania\*, they have adopted a theory involving the most palpable contradictions of Scripture. For in the first place the various nations of Syria were to serve the king of Babylon 70 years†, and distinctly Nebuchadnezzar and his son and his son's son. But being driven by their theory to look for Belshazzar in Evil Merodach, Neriglissar, or Laborosoarchod, (for the guesses vary,) they reduce the Babylonian dynasty to little more than 50 years; and supposing Darius the Mede to be Nabonadius himself, or to be the king of Media (either Astyages or his son) and Nabonadius merely his viceroy, they put the Medes into quiet possession of Babylon 17 years before its capture by Cyrus.

If on the other hand we consider Nabonadius as the Belshazzar of Daniel, and the son or rather grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, and slain at the

\* Joseph. Cont. Apion. I. 2c.

† Jer. xxv. 9-11, xxvii. 7.



capture of the city, Herodotus and Xenophon afford the most marked illustration of his brief account; the impious feast of Belshazzar is accounted for by the occurrence of an annual festival in which the Babylonians were put off their guard by their revels, being engaged as Xenophon says\* *ἐν κώμῳ*, as Herodotus† *ἐν εὐπαθείῃσι*. Xenophon distinctly states that some of the troops of Cyrus who stormed the city, burst into the palace, and slew the king. And Herodotus describes the king as the son of Nitocris, the queen apparently of either Nebuchadnezzar or Evil Mero-dach.

That the Belshazzar of Daniel was the Nabonadius whose reign by the Canon was terminated by the Medo-Persian conquest, is plain from the Divine announcement that his kingdom was to be given to the Medes and Persians‡; and that Darius the Mede was the successor of Nabonadius appears from his ruling by the laws of the Medes and Persians, as well as by his appointment of 120 princes§, a number clearly marking the then enlarged state of the empire of Cyrus, and making a near approach to the 127 provinces of Ahasuerus||. That the Canon should overlook this short and subordinate reign, and make Cyrus, who after all was the real conqueror and permanent sovereign of Babylon, succeed at once to the last

\* Xen. Cyrop. VII. p. 527. Oxford 1727.

† Herod. lib. I. cap. 191.

‡ Daniel v. 28. 31.

§ Daniel vi. 1. 8. 12. 15.

|| Esther i. 1.



Babylonian king, is no more than one might expect from its ordinary practice. That on the other hand the Jews in captivity should esteem as the king him, to whose immediate power they found themselves in actual subjection in the country, without reference to the source of his authority, as to its being independent, or divided, or subordinate, is perhaps still more natural.

These two reigns, which, thus understood, the Canon reckons at 9 years, the due termination of the captivity requires us to compute at 2 and 7 years respectively. Though Daniel gives no direct evidence of this division, he at least leaves it probable. "In the first year of Darius  
" he understood by books the number of the  
" years, whereof the word of the Lord came to  
" Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accom-  
" plish seventy years in the desolation of Jeru-  
" salem," and he goes on to pray for their termination\*. The mention of the *first* year of Darius seems to imply at least a second, but this obvious anticipation of the early close of the captivity would not naturally lead us much if at all further for the commencement of the reign of Cyrus. The light which Xenophon throws on this point however is quite remarkable, and the more so from the almost total want of chronological notices throughout the *Cyropædia*. After the capture of Babylon Cyrus appoints a palace there for the occasional residence of his uncle

\* Daniel ix. 2, 3.



and ally Cyaxares the king of Media\*, and a whole year† is passed in various arrangements of government, and among the rest the appointment of Satraps for the conquered provinces, reminding us of the 120 governors. In the following year he made an expedition with a vast army, and conquered Syria and the neighbouring nations to the borders of the Red Sea, and having thus completed the vast empire, of which the limits are next described, he adopts the plan of dividing his year between Babylon, Persia, and Media, according to their respective climates, the three spring months being assigned to Persia, and in Persia he dies during his 7th visit‡.

This account at once so satisfactorily fills up the 9 years of the Canon, and so clearly divides them as the Scriptural limits of the captivity require, and so convincingly identifies Darius the Mede with Cyaxares the son of Astyages, that it ought even of itself to screen the *Cyropædia* from the prejudices so generally conceived against it, as a mere romance, from which no safe historical information can be obtained. It was no doubt Xenophon's purpose to represent in Cyrus the model of a perfect prince from youth to manhood and from manhood to the close of life; and that he has accordingly invented and introduced such scenes, incidents, dialogues, and minor personages, as might best illustrate the qualities

\* Xen. *Cyrop.* Bk. VIII. p. 630.

† Ibid. p. 644.

‡ Ibid. p. 645, 646.



which he desired to attribute to him, is far from improbable; but that he based all this on a correct outline so far as the leading events, wars, conquests, reigning sovereigns, and most prominent characters of his history were concerned, is undeniable. We may, I think, admit that he perhaps suppressed some facts, and softened others, which must have trenched a little on his hero's character; as for example, that he preferred an instructive, and (for a heathen) an edifying death-bed discourse, and a peaceful close of life, to a violent death by the hands of barbarian Scythians: and again, when he considered the relationship of Cyrus to Astyages, he might have thought that it told better for the dutiful moderation of his hero's character to found the Medo-Persian alliance on mutual agreement, rather than on a Persian supremacy enforced by arms. It is somewhat curious however that Xenophon himself, in his *Anabasis* represents the retreating Greeks as passing by the deserted city Larissa, which he says the king of Persia besieged and took, when the Persians took the empire from the Medes, and also a large deserted fortress near the city Mespila, whither the queen of Media fled for refuge in that war\*. It seems evident enough that Cyrus first roused his Persian countrymen to cast off the subjection of Media, and, having thus made them sensible of their strength, under his guidance to wrest the supremacy from

\* Xen. *Anab.* III. iv. 7, 10.



the Medes themselves. It by no means follows however, that, when Cyrus had thus, though by force, attained the object of his ambition, he either absolutely dethroned his grandfather, or so far usurped the place of his son and successor Cyaxares (his own uncle), as to deprive him of the external dignity of royalty. He looked forward to the sovereignty of Media by actual succession, and in the interim he could far more effectually employ the united power of Medians and Persians for the furtherance of conquests in Lydia and elsewhere by making them his willing auxiliaries, and treating their king as his ally and friend. Xenophon is of course no safe authority for the extent to which this dutiful and graceful deference was carried. But we have the unimpeachable authority of Daniel for the fact of royal dignity and authority being possessed by the individual, whom he designates as Darius the Mede; and it only remains to complete his identification with Cyaxares king of Media.

Some go so far as to suppose the Cyaxares of Xenophon to have had no real existence at all, but that he was an imaginary personage introduced in the narrative as a convenient foil to display by contrast the superior qualities of Cyrus. It is of course not always possible where history and romance are intermixed, to decide as to every character whether he is drawn from actual history, or whether he is merely a fiction of the author to illustrate his



theory, or carry out the current of his tale. But Xenophon himself has decided this question clearly enough in the case before us; for when he speaks of Cyrus marrying the daughter of his uncle, he not only says that the fame of her beauty still survived (ἔτι καὶ νῦν), but that some historians (ἐνίοι τῶν λογοποιῶν) report that she was a sister of his mother, but that he decides against them, as she must at that time (after the capture of Babylon) have been too old\*. In this instance at all events Xenophon does not suppose himself to be treating of fictitious personages.

Returning however to Daniel, we find him describing Darius as the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, so that the identity of Darius and Cyaxares independently of the direct proofs of it, of which some have already appeared, may be indirectly and perhaps even more satisfactorily shown by proving that by Ahasuerus Daniel can but mean Astyages king of Media. In the first place Josephus, who enjoyed the advantage of a far wider range of authorities than are now accessible to us, had no doubt on the subject, for he says, that they were Cyrus the king of the Persians, and Darius the king of the Medes, who made war on Baltasar who was called by the Babylonians† Nabonadus; and again it was Baltasar, in whose reign it came to pass that Babylon was taken after he had reigned 17

\* Xen. Cyrop. VIII. p. 635.

† Joseph. Antiq. Jud. X. xi. 2.



years; and this we learn to be the end of the posterity of Nebuchadnezzar; but Darius, who with his relation Cyrus overthrew the Babylonian empire was in his 62nd year when he took Babylon: he was the son of Astyages; and was called by another name among the Greeks\*. Here then we have the authority of Josephus for several facts enlarging the information which we glean from the brief statement of Daniel; viz., that Belshazzar, called also Naboandelus, reigned 17 years, and was therefore unquestionably the Nabonadius of the Canon; that Darius was related to Cyrus, that he was himself king of Media, that he bore another name among the Greeks, and moreover was the son of Astyages, who is thus identified with the Ahasuerus of Daniel. Should it be contended that this is merely the opinion of Josephus, who might after all be mistaken, living as he did several centuries after the transactions he is recording, the main point, viz. the identity of Astyages and Ahasuerus, which involves most of the rest, may be most satisfactorily concluded from the far more ancient authority of the Book of Tobit, which informs us that Nineveh was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus†, the leaders of course of the Babylonians and Medes respectively. The sovereigns of Babylon and Media at this period (the precise date I shall presently consider more particularly) were Nabopolassar and Cyaxares,

\* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. X. xi. 4.

† Tobit xiv. 15.



both however far advanced in years. Their sons however and eventual successors Nebuchadnezzar and Astyages were in the prime of life and may well be supposed to have been the actual conductors of the siege, and therefore identical with Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus. The age of 62 also, which Daniel assigns to Darius\* at the capture of Babylon may throw its share of light on this identification of his father. For being about 62 in B. C. 538, he was born about B. C. 600, and Cyrus his nephew being within a year or two of his own age (for he died at an advanced age, according to some authorities 70, only nine years after the capture of Babylon) Cyaxares the presumed Darius and his sister Mandane the mother of Cyrus were of very different ages, very probably the children of Astyages by different mothers. Now appositely enough for the supposition, the marriage of Astyages with Aryene the daughter of Alyattis king of Lydia took place in or soon after B. C. 603, the year of the famous eclipse predicted by Thales, which put a stop to the battle between the Medes and Lydians, and led to the peace, which was cemented by this royal intermarriage†. Some chronologers prefer the eclipse of B. C. 601, but astronomical tables lead us to conclude that this was not total or visible in Asia Minor. The eclipses of B. C. 607, 609, and 585, selected by others, are out of the question chronologically, as the battle took place

\* Daniel v. 31.

† Herod. I. 16, 17, 103.



in the 6th year of the war, which originated in the protection afforded by the Lydians to the refugee Scythians, the expulsion of the Scythians having occurred (as we shall presently see) about B. C. 608. Here therefore are very fair grounds for supposing Darius the Mede to be the offspring of the marriage of Astyages with the Lydian princess.

The importance of the above investigations will, I have no doubt, be readily admitted, since it is these very doubts about Darius the Mede that have been suffered to corrupt the Canon and confuse the captivity. We will next turn our attention to the much disputed date of the destruction of Nineveh, which, though not absolutely essential to the great outline of sacred chronology, is nevertheless well deserving of attention from its collateral bearing on some of the points already discussed, and its own intrinsic interest. The account in the book of Judith \* of the death of Arphaxad king of Media in battle with Nabuchodonosor, who reigned in Nineveh, so exactly accords with that of the death of Phraortes king of Media in battle with a king of Assyria as recorded by Herodotus † that the events are clearly identical, and may on careful examination throw light on the chronology of this intricate period. The revolt of the Medes from the Assyrians certainly took place on the ruin of the Assyrian

\* Judith i.

† Herod. lib. I. cap. 102.



power by the disastrous expedition of Sennacherib. The loss of his army took place B.C. 710, the year preceding the sabbatical year 709. The revolt might possibly have preceded this last date a little, and been encouraged by the long absence of Sennacherib from his dominions.

|                                                               | Years. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Herodotus assigns to Dejoces, the first Median king . . . . . | 53     |
| And to Phraortes. . . . .                                     | 22     |
|                                                               | <hr/>  |
|                                                               | 75     |

Now taking the date of revolt to be B.C. 710, and allowing for these 75 years, we have B.C. 635 for the death of Phraortes. But Ptolemy's Canon as before explained gives Assaradin, Saosduchin and Chyniladon preceding Nabopolassar, who are apparently Esarhaddon after the recovery of his rule over Babylon, and his two successors in the same power; and Chyniladon's 1st year being B.C. 647 his 12th year\* must be B.C. 636. Here then is at once so near an approach to the same year, that we can scarcely doubt that the Nabuchodonosor of Judith is the Chyniladon of the Canon. In fact, if we assume, as we have a right to do, the accuracy of the Canon, and suppose, (what is quite probable,) either that one year of Herodotus is current, or that the revolt commenced during

\* N.B. I have preferred the 12th of Nabuchodonosor, according to the Latin copies of Judith i. 13, to the 17th of the Greek copies which our translators have followed, as it at once cures the strange improbability (i. i. 13) of five years elapsing before the battle.



Sennacherib's absence, we may have an exact identity, and may venture to correct the looser date of Herodotus, and assign the death of Phraortes with some confidence to B. C. 636. The disastrous expedition of Holophernes takes place the year following, viz. B. C. 635. And here we at once find an answer to one of the apparent inconsistencies of the book of Judith, the not mentioning the king of Judah; for this is the 5th of Josiah, who as a boy of 12 years old could not be so well referred to for advice in the emergency as the high priest Joachim, who laid down the plan of defence for the country. The absurd\* anachronism which represents the Jews as returned from captivity in the days of the Assyrian and Median kings has of course thrown much discredit on the book of Judith, but is probably an ignorant enlargement and interpolation of what was at first merely meant as an allusion to the recent captivity of Manasses at Babylon. Reverting once more to Herodotus we find Cyaxares intent on avenging his father's death, and most probably in the year following, while the Assyrian forces were engaged as we have seen in Syria and Judah, defeating the troops opposed to him, and laying siege to Nineveh, when he is interrupted by the great Scythian invasion, which we may thus fairly assign to the year B. C. 635. The Scythians remained masters of Upper Asia, wasting

\* Judith iv. 3, v. 18, 19.



and plundering in all directions for 28 years, until at length Cyaxares and the Medes succeeded in expelling them and recovering their former sovereignty. The capture and destruction of Nineveh appears to follow without delay. Now reckoning these years as current rather than complete, (as the phrase ἐπὶ ὀκτὼ καὶ εἴκοσι ἔτεα ἦρχον most probably implies,) we are brought to B.C. 608 for the year of the expulsion of the Scythians, the year therefore before which Nineveh was not taken.

The dates in the book of Tobit lead very remarkably to a similar conclusion. Tobit lost his\* eyesight at the feast of Pentecost after the death of Sennacherib, viz. B.C. 709. He was then 58 years old†, and having on his death-bed warned his son to leave Nineveh as its destruction was approaching‡, he dies aged 158, i. e. in B.C. 609. Tobias accordingly retires to Ecbatane and rejoices over the destruction of Nineveh before his death at the age of 127§. But as Tobit's age at the birth of Tobias is not stated, we cannot date his death, and it only remains that Nineveh was destroyed not long after B.C. 609.

We have seen that Josiah was slain B.C. 608 by Pharaoh Necho, when he went up against the king of Assyria, which seems to imply that Nineveh was then still in being; but the extra-

\* Tobit ii. 1—10.

† Ibid. xiv. 1.

‡ Ibid. 11.

§ Ibid. 14, 15.



ordinary facility, with which he appears to have accompanied his object, and to have established his power on the Euphrates, is best accounted for by the supposition that both Assyrians and Babylonians were wholly engrossed by the approaching or perhaps actual contest at Nineveh, and therefore unable to offer him any resistance. But the case is widely altered in the spring of B. C. 605, when Nebuchadnezzar not only drives the Egyptians from Carchemish, but overruns Syria and Palestine to the very borders of Egypt. No doubt Nineveh had fallen in the interval; for when Jeremiah this very year B. C. 605 prophesies afflictions for all the neighbouring nations by name, Assyria and Nineveh are not mentioned.

This marked accordance of the testimony of the books of Judith and Tobit, with the notices of Canonical Scripture as well as of Herodotus, may surely entitle them to some respect for their historical outline, however mixed up their detail may be with less valuable matter. The result however of the whole comparison is that there seems no doubt that Nineveh fell either in B. C. 607 or B. C. 606. I think most chronologers prefer the latter date, and they may possibly be right; but in the absence of direct evidence I confess, that for one or two reasons I have a preference for the former. In the first place Nabopolassar (or more probably Nebuchadnezzar acting for him) had to share his Assyrian conquest with



his ambitious neighbours the Medes, and from obvious policy this must have been his first care, and his next from a similar policy to establish his empire, as he appears to have done without loss of time, towards the north in Armenia, &c. and we cannot assign less than a year for such arrangements, or indeed find another time for them; for from the time that he dislodged the Egyptians from their stronghold on the Euphrates and turned his arms towards Syria, the various nations in that quarter seem to have found him full employment for many years. In the next place the same prophecy which assigns a captivity of 70 years to the Jews and all their neighbours appears to give also 70 years to the Babylonian dynasty. Now the dynasty came to its close two years before the close of the captivity, and to what can we so consistently turn to compensate this deficiency as to the fall of Nineveh, which was beyond all question the grand event which fixed the era of the Babylonian empire, and which therefore I am inclined to place in B.C. 607. However, I leave this to the judgment of my readers, and am satisfied with referring them once more to the points, which I venture to consider as absolutely proved, viz. the commencement of the captivity in B.C. 605, its close in B.C. 536, and more than all, because it is the most important of all as the connecting link between sacred and profane chronology, the



destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in  
B. C. 586.

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|                                                                              | B. C. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Creation (Autumn) .....                                                      | 4005  |
| Deluge (A. M. 1656) .....                                                    | 2349  |
| Call of Abraham (A. M. 2082, 6) .....                                        | 1922  |
| Exodus (A. M. 2512, 6) .....                                                 | 1492  |
| Foundation of Temple (A. M. 2991, 7) .....                                   | 1013  |
| Dedication of Temple (A. M. 3000) .....                                      | 1005  |
| Revolt of 10 tribes (A. M. 3028, 11 circ.) .....                             | 976   |
| Commencement of 70 years' captivity .....                                    | 605   |
| Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (A. M. }<br>3418, 11 circ.) ..... | 586   |
| End of Captivity .....                                                       | 536   |

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## CHAPTER IX.

### PROOFS OF THE DATES OF THE NATIVITY AND BAPTISM OF JESUS CHRIST.

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IT appears singular, that to this day there is no general agreement as to the dates of the Birth and Ministry of our Saviour. The vulgar Christian era is allowed on all hands to be incorrect by several years; it originated with Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman monk, but a Scythian by birth, about A. D. 532, before which time various eras had prevailed, chiefly that of Diocletian. It is easy to trace the error. The 15th of Tiberius (stated by St. Luke as the year of the preaching of John the Baptist\*) if counted from the death of Augustus, Aug. 19. A. U. 767, A. D. 14, includes the larger half of A. U. 782, A. D. 29. Add to this the not uncommon supposition, that our Saviour, when baptized towards the end of this year, was only just entering on his 30th year, instead of being full 30 years old, and his birth is thus fixed at the end of A. U. 753, B. C. 1. This however is found to contra-

\* Luke iii. 1.



dict St. Matthew's account of his being born before the death of Herod, which took place not later than A. U. 751, B. C. 3, the doubts of the learned lying between that year and the year preceding. Again, it is an unsettled question, whether our Saviour was born in the year immediately preceding the death of Herod, or still earlier. It being also necessary to look for the commencement of the reign of Tiberius in his previous admission to a joint sovereignty with Augustus; the exact year of this is found open to question, as is likewise the commencement of the government of Pontius Pilate, in whose time the ministry of John the Baptist began; and, finally, it is doubted whether our Saviour's age at his baptism was 30 years commenced or complete.

Now all these questions, with one exception, if distinctly considered, and tried on their own separate evidences, seem scarcely capable of being placed beyond doubt or cavil: the one exception is the time of the death of Herod, which, though still questioned by some, rests on such evidence as places it, I most confidently maintain, beyond all reasonable controversy.

I begin with this point, that I may the better clear the way for the consideration of the rest.

I. We learn from Josephus, that Herod was made king by the Roman senate in the consulship of C. Domitius Calvinus II, and C. Asinius Pollio\*, viz. A. U. 714, B. C. 40; and that the cap-

\* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. XIV. xiv. 5.



ture of Jerusalem and death of Antigonus took place in the consulship of Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus, viz. A.U. 717. B. C. 37. Now he is afterwards said to have died having reigned 34 years from the death of Antigonus, and 37 from his appointment by the Romans\*. If these are to be considered complete years, he died in A.U. 751. B.C. 3; if otherwise, in A.U. 750. B.C. 4.

Instances are not wanting of both these modes of reckoning in Josephus, but I think the latter much predominate. Thus the capture of Jerusalem by Herod B. C. 37 is called 27 years from that by Pompey† B. C. 63; and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus A. D. 70, 107 years from the beginning of Herod's reign‡ B. C. 37; the fragments of the first and last years being in both instances reckoned as whole years. Again in the *Antiquities*, he says, Herod died on the *fifth day* after his son Antipater†; in the *Wars*, *five days* after§. These two modes of expression being of course intended to be equivalent, and the former giving his meaning the more correctly. Lardner however is not perfectly satisfied, that such instances as those of the sieges fully meet this case; for that if the last years named respectively are not complete, they are at least current; whereas, the commencement of Herod's reign being somewhat later in the year than his death, even the 33rd and 36th years are

\* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. XIV. xvi. 4.      † Ibid. XVII. viii. 1.

‡ Ibid. XX. x. sub finem.      § De Bello Jud. I. xxxiii. 8.



not complete. It is plain however, that this theory of current years is not the true key of Josephus's mode of calculating. Whatever may be the case with the 107 years from the uncertainty of the exact date of one of the sieges, at all events the capture of Jerusalem by Herod is stated as the exact anniversary of that by Pompey; consequently, though 26 years are just completed, there is no room to say that the 27th was current. From the tenour of the narrative in Josephus, the execution of Antipater follows so closely on Herod's receipt of dispatches from Rome, that it probably took place before the end of the same day. Now as this day appears to be taken inclusively in reckoning the five days to the death of Herod, are we to suppose, that before Josephus ventured to speak of the fifth day, he stopped to ascertain whether the hour of Herod's death was earlier or later than that of Antipater, so as to be sure that more than four times 24 hours had elapsed before the latter event? Assuredly there is nothing either in the precision of Josephus, or in the customary reckoning of those days, which should lead to the supposition. Our Saviour's resurrection is spoken of as having taken place three days, or on the third day, after his crucifixion. The interval however really consisted of but one whole day, and two small parts of days taken inclusively, and falling many hours short of even two days of 24 hours each. A male child was circumcised on the



eighth day, the day of the birth and the day of the circumcision being inclusive,—in plain English, at the week's end. Now he might be born at a late hour of the day and be circumcised at an earlier hour, so as for seven days of 24 hours each to be still incomplete, and yet according to the understood computation be circumcised on the eighth day.

I have said thus much in illustration of the probable meaning of Josephus in the case before us, admitting at the same time, that he occasionally adopts a different mode of reckoning, and that this absence of uniform consistency and exactness in such matters makes some additional and collateral evidence necessary to remove all remaining doubt on the subject.

Three of Herod's sons succeeded him in portions of his kingdom, Archelaus in Judæa and Samaria, Philip in Trachonitis and Gaulonitis, and Herod Antipas in Galilee and Peræa, so that whatever is ascertainable of the length of their reigns and of the dates of their termination must have an important bearing on this question. Archelaus, as we learn from Josephus, was deposed for his tyranny by the Romans in the 10th year of his government\* : and Dio expressly places this deposition among the transactions of A.U. 759†; whence it appears that he succeeded his father in A.U. 750. Philip died, according to

\* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. XVII. xiii. 2.

† Dio, lib. LV. c.



Josephus, in the 22nd year of Tiberius\*, viz. A.U. 786, having governed 37 years. Full years would carry his accession back to A.U. 749, which is out of the question. He died therefore in the 37th year of his government, and succeeded his father A.U. 750. Herod Antipas appears to have been deposed A.U. 792, in the summer season, by Caligula then at Baiæ, and his tetrarchy to have been then or not long after given to Agrippa†. Josephus does not mention the duration of his government, but there is a coin of his‡ dated in his 43rd year. This would be the year A.U. 792, if Herod succeeded his father in A.U. 750; whereas those who, with Greswell§, place the death of Herod the Great in A.U. 751, are sorely pressed by this coin, and driven to the barely possible supposition, that the news of the deposal might not have reached Judæa in time to prevent its being struck in A.U. 793. The two first cases therefore are clearly in favour of placing Herod's death in A.U. 750. B.C. 4; and the last is not readily to be explained against it. We might, I think, be fairly satisfied with such evidence as this; but a proof yet remains to be adduced, which ought to set the question of Herod's death for ever at rest.

We learn from Josephus, that Herod died not long after an eclipse of the moon, and not long before a Passover; and astronomical calculation

\* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. XVIII. iv. 6.      † Ibid. XVIII. vii. 2.

‡ Vide Eckhel Doct. Numm. Vet. III. 486.    § Greswell, vol. i. p. 235.



gives such an eclipse on March 13th A. U. 750. B. C. 4, (of course one month before the Paschal Full Moon of that year,) but no approximation to such a coincidence in the year following. A brief reference however to the narrative of Josephus is required to give a clear idea of this most interesting and important fact, and to place it beyond all further question or cavil.

Herod having convicted his son Antipater of conspiring against his life casts him into prison, and sends ambassadors to Rome to consult Augustus on the case. While they were on their way to Rome, Herod fell into a serious illness, which induced him to make his will, and ere very long led to the general opinion that he could not survive it, and became an encouragement to the seditious and discontented; in fact, as it should seem, about March 11th, on the report of his actual dissolution, a party of zealots tore down from the gate of the temple a large golden eagle, with which he had adorned it in violation of the laws. They were seized and taken before a council, which the king summoned at Jericho, being himself carried there in a chair; the ring-leaders were condemned to be burnt, and on the night of the execution Josephus informs us that the moon was eclipsed. Herod grew daily worse, being himself the only person who had not abandoned hope. Among the changes of remedy to which he had recourse, he was conveyed to the hot baths of Callirrhoe on the borders of the



Dead Sea beyond the Jordan (perhaps 12 or 15 miles from Jericho); he almost dies under the experiment of an oil bath immediately on his arrival there, and now being himself convinced of the hopelessness of his case returns at once to Jericho. This need not have occupied more than a month from the execution. Then follows the diabolical plan of summoning the chief men of the country, and confining them in the circus at Jericho with the view of having them massacred at his funeral. Considering his peremptory summons and the smallness of his kingdom, two or three days may have sufficed to bring them together. His explanation of his plan to his sister and her husband and the arrival of his ambassadors happen simultaneously. His excitement on their intelligence, his falling into a fit, Antipater's hopes and imprudence thereupon, and the order for his immediate execution require but a few hours; he dies on the fifth day (four days) afterwards; his obsequies occupy a week. Three weeks will well suffice for all that has yet been stated: but two or three days more may be allowed; for Archelaus anxious to start for Rome, to secure his succession from Augustus, loses no time in addressing the people in the Temple, but finding his own conciliatory language met by clamour and sedition, and shortly afterwards by the actual violence of the people now aided by the crowds assembling for the Passover, he orders



his soldiers to quell the tumult, slaughters great numbers and breaks up the feast.

Greswell is disposed to think Herod's disorder much more lingering than is here supposed, and even to doubt the accuracy of Josephus as to the eclipse; but happening as that did, it was evidently a coincidence calculated to make a strong impression on superstitious minds, and to have become too notorious to admit of mistake.

Ussher and others admitting the coincidence of the execution and the eclipse, persuade themselves that Herod did not die till the 25th of the following November, depending on a Jewish account of fasts and feasts, which gives a feast on that day as kept for Herod's death, but which Lardner considers as a book of no authority\*.

But with all the disposition of these persons to overlook plain statements, when they stand in the way of a favourite theory, I conceive that their notions of Herod's lingering disorder could never have held out against the plain fact, had they not wholly overlooked it, that its duration is closely limited by the time which the ambassadors, sent as they were on urgent business, spent in their journey to Rome and back. Herod was not ill till they had been gone some time, and he survived their return but five days.

Unless then we entirely reject the authority of Josephus, and "if we do," as Lardner very pro-

\* Lardner, vol. i. 443.



perly observes, "it is in vain to talk of the time " of Herod's death," we must admit, that Herod died about the first of April or the very last day or two of March A. U. 750, B. C. 4. I cannot but consider this as certain and beyond all reasonable doubt.

II. As to the question, whether our Saviour was born in the year immediately preceding the death of Herod, or still earlier, there appears I think nothing in the narrative of St. Matthew which can at once decide it. The argument from the age of the infants whom Herod caused to be massacred at Bethlehem, "from two years old " and under," which may seem to point to the earlier date, is obviously met by the reckless cruelty of Herod's character, and his jealous determination not to miss his object by taking insufficient scope; not to mention that the phrase ἀπὸ διετοῦς, probably indicates children of the second year, rather than full two years old.

The great length of time supposed by some to be required for the journey of the Magi, and the notion of others, that there were two appearances of the star, the first of which indicated the nativity, and the second summoned them to set out, are forced and unsatisfactory; indeed it is difficult to imagine that they would have found the Virgin and child at Bethlehem at all very long after her purification, as her visit there was compulsory and attended with personal inconvenience. Persia indeed rather than Arabia may



seem from their appellation to have been the country of the Magi; but six or seven weeks was ample time for them, unless encumbered by needless retinue, to have travelled from beyond the Euphrates or the Tigris.

To say, as some have said, that the holy family probably stayed some considerable time in Egypt, is to say, in other words, that probably Herod lived some considerable time longer, the reasons for remaining there being wholly dependent on his life, whether he survived two months or two years.

It is natural to inquire what light is thrown on this question by Josephus; but, singular as it may seem, he makes no mention whatever of the massacre at Bethlehem; nor even of that taxing, or more properly census or enrolment, which led to our Saviour's birth in that place. He does however mention an oath of allegiance to Augustus and Herod, which the whole Jewish nation were called upon to swear about this time, and which many persons have, I think with great probability, considered as connected with the census, and he adds some attendant circumstances which may be deemed worthy of notice for their possible bearing on this question. He informs us that this oath was refused by more than 6000 of the sect of the Pharisees, that Herod imposed a fine on them for this refusal, that the wife of Herod's brother Pheroras paid it for them\*,

\* Josephus, *Antiq.* XVII. ii. 4.



thereby incurring Herod's heavy displeasure, that these Pharisees affected the gift of prophecy and foretold the transfer of kingly power from Herod and his family to another, and thus excited the jealous rage of Herod, who put to death some of their leaders, together with several of his own court and household who appeared to be in league with them.

Now though Josephus speaks of them contemptuously and without any commiseration, I think it must be quite clear that their assumption of the gift of prophecy was nothing more than their interpretation of the prophecies relating to the coming of the Messiah, and that they were among the number of those who were then looking for his early appearance as a temporal prince. This accounts for the bitterness of Herod's jealousy, so exactly parallel to that which led him to slaughter the innocents at Bethlehem. Lardner goes so far as to suppose that both these acts of cruelty occurred at the same time, since the arrival and the reports of the Magi may have encouraged the Pharisees to a more open avowal of their views. He supposes moreover that the census and the offences of the Pharisees took place at the time of the execution two years before Herod's death, viz. in B.C. 6. It happens however that Josephus enables us to fix the execution of the Pharisees at about the beginning of the year following, and it is little likely that



the vigilance of Herod's jealousy respecting them should have slept for so many months.

The date of these two executions may be thus determined. Their immediate effect on the mind of Antipater was alarm for his own safety, as not knowing who might be the next victim of his father's fury, conscious too as he was of his deserts, being himself actually engaged in a plot for his destruction. He therefore loses no time in requesting his friends at Rome to frame a pretext for his journey thither; he stays there seven months; his trial and conviction instantly follow on his return; messengers are despatched to ascertain the opinion of Augustus; he is executed on their return, and Herod dies four or five days after. We have therefore little more to add to the seven months' absence than the time required for two communications with Rome\*, which the urgency of the occasions would of course have rendered as speedy as possible.

Under these circumstances the execution of the Pharisees might very well have occurred at the beginning of B. C. 5, and at the probable commencement of the census which had tempted them to offend.

The business of the census would occupy a considerable time. In the parallel case of David's numbering the people, the proceedings occupied

\* For the time of journeys between the East and Rome, see the authorities in Greswell, Vol. I. Dissert. VII.



nine months and twenty days. As all persons were to be registered at the proper seat of their tribe and family, and not wherever they might happen to reside, the winter season would naturally be avoided as inconvenient for the measure to the country in general, though for its commencement among the settled inhabitants of Jerusalem, where these recusant Pharisees were no doubt mostly to be found, and where the census was far more likely to commence than to close, it might have been suitable enough. There can be no remaining difficulty in supposing that the census in its progress through the country might take place at Bethlehem at the presumed season of the nativity.

A census, it may be said, appears by no means necessarily to involve an oath of allegiance. But, *vice versa*, an oath of allegiance could hardly be exacted without a registration of the names of those who took it, or refused it; a consideration which gives, I think, a great increase of probability to the supposed connexion between the census of St. Luke and the oath of Josephus. Since otherwise there must have taken place nearly at the same time two separate registrations affecting the whole Jewish people; a circumstance which at all events appears very improbable.

That what has been thus adduced fixes the birth of our Saviour quite demonstratively to the year before the death of Herod, I do not



venture to assert. I therefore leave the question for such further light as may be thrown on it from considering the year assigned by St. Luke to his baptism.

III. The 15th year of Tiberius reckoned from the death of Augustus being, as has been already explained, too far removed from the death of Herod, it remains to be inquired what other commencement of his reign St. Luke had in view, when he spoke of the ministry of John the Baptist, and our Saviour's baptism, as happening in the 15th year of it. The fact of his joint sovereignty with Augustus for some time before the death of the latter is clear from various authorities, the exact date of it alone being open to question.

Tacitus, who might have given the most satisfactory evidence, yet commencing his *Annals*, properly so called, from the death of Augustus merely notices this fact among other prefatory matters in terms indeed sufficiently decisive, but without a date. We collect that Augustus after the death of his grandsons Caius and Lucius turned his thoughts to Tiberius; and then that "*illuc cuncta vergere; filius, collega imperii, consors Tribuniciae potestatis adsumitur, omnesque per exercitus ostentatur*.\*" The time however was evidently after the destruction of Varus and his legions in Germany; for it is stated that there was no war except against the

\* Tacit. *Annal.* I. 3.



Germans, undertaken rather for the sake of wiping out that disgrace, than with a view to conquest\*.

The united testimony however of Velleius Paterculus, Suetonius, and Dio will bring us still nearer to the point of time. It appears that the Pannonian revolts employed Tiberius through three campaigns†, in the last of which the seat of war was transferred to Dalmatia. This year is distinctly noticed by Dio, as the consular year of Q. Sulpicius Camerinus and C. Poppæus Sabrinus, viz., A.U. 762, in which he speaks of Tiberius coming to Rome in the spring, and then returning to Dalmatia, bringing the war to a close‡. Within five days§ after the termination of this war the news arrived of the slaughter of Varus and his army; in consequence of which the Triumph which had been decreed for these successes is deferred||, the presence of Tiberius being required in Germany.

Here he passed two years¶, the years A.U. 763, 764; and his campaign of this last year, and return to Rome with Germanicus in the autumn are distinctly noticed by Dio\*\*. His triumph, which had been deferred for two years, takes place†† this winter; indeed the exact date of

\* Tacit. Annal. I. 3. † Suet. in Tib. 16. Velleius II. 112, &c.

‡ Dio LVI. 1 and 12, Velleius II. 115. § Velleius II. 117.

|| Suet. Tib. 17.

¶ Ibid. 20.

\*\* Dio LVI. 25.

†† Suet. Tib. 20.



Jan. 16. A. U. 765 is assigned to it in the *Fasti Verrii*\*.

Next follows the statement of Suetonius, concerning his admission to the joint sovereignty in question. “Ac non multo post lege per consules  
“lata, ut provincias cum Augusto communiter  
“administraret, simulque censum ageret, condito  
“lustrum in Illyricum profectus est†.”

Velleius indeed appears to make a decree for this admission to precede his return to the city for his triumph. “Cum senatus populusque  
“Romanus, postulante patris ejus, ut æquum  
“ei jus in omnibus provinciis exercitibusque  
“esset (quam erat ipsi) decreto complexus esset:  
“(etenim absurdum erat, non esse sub illo, quæ  
“ab illo vindicabantur, et qui ad opem ferendam  
“primus erat, ad vindicandum honorem non ju-  
“dicari” parem) in urbem reversus, jam pridem  
“debitum, sed continuatione bellorum delatum,  
“ex Pannoniis Dalmatisque egit triumphum‡.”  
The full equality of power decreed to Tiberius is here very strongly expressed, and may give some grounds for dating his joint sovereignty in A. U. 764. But if this decree were complete and final, there would have been no occasion for the consular *law* afterwards. I should incline therefore to the opinion that the decree was a *preparatory step*, and the *law* its full and regular ratification, and consequently to date his imperial power from

\* *Fasti Verrii*, p. 14, as quoted by Eckhel *Doct. Num. Vet.* vol. VI. p. 186.

† *Suet. Tib.* 21.

‡ *Velleius II.* 121.



A. U. 765. B. C. 12, which makes his 15th year B. C. 26.

Between this and the preceding year A. U. 764, B. C. 11, (which of course would make his 15th year B. C. 25) Lardner professes himself unable to decide; and if we stop at the strictly historical evidence, we must consent, I think, to be left in some doubt. St. Luke however makes his 15th year of Tiberius coincide with a part of the time during which Pontius Pilate was governor of Judæa, a point which will be found to deserve attention, from its important bearing on the doubt before us.

IV. The commencement of the government of Pontius Pilate has been considered open to question, and this doubt has arisen chiefly from that want of uniform consistency, which we have before noticed in the numerical statements of Josephus. The time of its termination however is, or at least ought to be, open to no question at all; for his dismissal by Vitellius the president of Syria happened so late in the last year of Tiberius, that, as Josephus distinctly states, on his arrival at Rome he found Tiberius already dead\*.

I have said that there *ought* to be no question, because Lardner, failing in his accustomed judgment and perspicacity, has thrown a doubt on this point from taking it for granted that certain transactions of Vitellius, occupying apparently about two years before the death of Tiberius,

\* Joseph. Antiq. XVIII. iv. 2.



being related by Josephus after the dismissal of Pontius Pilate, really took place after it ; whereas it is quite easy to see that Josephus was led by his subject to mention this event by anticipation.

He is speaking of several untoward occurrences of the times, and among the rest the banishment of the Jews from Rome, the mention of which leads him to observe that the Samaritans also did not escape their share of trouble, and then to add that the excessive cruelty of Pontius Pilate in suppressing a tumult among them induced Vitellius to remove him from his government. Having been thus led to the mention of Vitellius for the first time, he goes back to a more regular narrative of his transactions, as president of Syria, with the Jews, Parthians, Arabians, &c.

Owing to this oversight Lardner is led to the awkward alternative of either questioning the accuracy of the plain statement of Josephus respecting his arrival at Rome, or of supposing that he lingered on his way for a year and a half or two years. The haste of his departure and his fear of disobeying are expressly noted : “ εἰς  
 “ Ῥώμην ἡπείγετο, ταῖς Οὐτελλίου πειθόμενος ἐντολαῖς  
 “ οὐκ ὄν ἀντειπεῖν\*.” When once on his journey, he might possibly, with the unpleasant prospect before him of giving an account of his doings to Tiberius, have found the advanced season a favourable excuse for wintering in Greece or elsewhere, but that he should have dared to delay

\* Joseph. Antiq. XVIII. iv. 2.



his return after the sea was again considered open to navigators, is not likely, and the death of Tiberius so early as March 16 offers no occasion for supposing that he did so. Thus much delay may be fairly allowed, but the addition of a year or even more is utterly incredible.

On the other hand, if Josephus is not to be credited in a statement of this kind, striking in itself, necessarily notorious, and scarcely removed from his own day, where are we to trust him at all? and again, if Pilate returned to Rome in the reign of Tiberius, how happens it that Caligula, not Tiberius, banished him to Gaul?

I deem it therefore unquestionable that Pontius Pilate was dismissed from his government in A. U. 789, A. D. 36, and probably late in the summer. Josephus assigns ten years to his government\*, which commenced therefore either A. D. 26 or A. D. 27, accordingly as the years are to be counted complete or otherwise.

I will give one remarkable proof of this sort of uncertainty in Josephus. Caligula is well known to have reigned three years and about 10 months. Not long after his accession, he made Herod Agrippa Tetrarch of Trachonitis, &c. Now Josephus states the duration of his power under Caligula in round numbers, in his *Antiquities*, as *four* years, in his *Wars*, as *three*†.

Fully admitting therefore some degree of a

\* Joseph. Antiq. XVIII. iv. 2.

† Joseph. Antiq. XIX. viii. 2; Bell. Jud. II. xi. 6.



*priori* uncertainty in the round numbers of Josephus, I proceed to offer a remark or two showing the high probability of his intending 10 *full* years in the case before us.

In the first place, the procurators of Judæa (generally in rather rapid succession) must, reckoning for the length of the voyage from Rome after their appointment, have made their appearance about midsummer, and been in power a certain number of nearly exact years counted from summer to summer, thus offering to Josephus no opportunity for hesitating in his round numbers, as in the case of kings' reigns, terminating irregularly with several months perhaps of excess or defect. Again, it appears, that Tiberius appointed only two procurators, Valerius Gratus soon after his accession, and Pontius Pilate; to the first of whom Josephus assigns 11 years\*, to the latter 10 years. Augustus died Aug. 19, A.U. 767, A.D. 14; and as it is not probable that the new governors of distant provinces were sent out before the approaching winter, we must presume Gratus to have come into office A.D. 15; his 11 full years would have expired A.D. 26; and Pilate's 10 in A.D. 36; Tiberius dying in March A.D. 37. Thus full years duly coincide with the duration of the reign of Tiberius, which incomplete years would not do.

Allowing however thus far a possible doubt between the years A.D. 26 and A.D. 27 for the

\* Joseph. Antiq. XVIII. ii. 2.



commencement of Pilate's government, we have only to compare these years with the years A. D. 25 and A. D. 26, between which alone we can have hesitated to fix the 15th year of Tiberius, as reckoned from his joint sovereignty with Augustus, and the doubts in both cases vanish at once. For the year A. D. 27 in the one case coincides with no year assignable as such 15th of Tiberius, and the year A. D. 25 in the other coincides with no possible year of Pilate's government.

Thus by a species of *reductio ad absurdum* one year in each case must be abandoned as untenable upon the data of St. Luke, and there remains but the year A. D. 26 which can be at once the 15th of Tiberius sought for, and also a year of Pontius Pilate, the year therefore of John's preaching and our Lord's baptism.

V. As to the question, whether our Lord's age at his baptism was 30 years commenced or complete, I believe the general leaning to be towards the latter interpretation. Thirty years was the appointed age of office for Priests and Levites, and St. Luke's expression ὥσεί ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ἀρχόμενος appears to imply a very near approximation to the age of 30 years, rather than the commencement of the 30th year. But passing this, we have but to remember the advantage already secured in the fixed point of A. U. 779, A. D. 26, for the year of Baptism, as compared with the fixed point of Herod's death A. U. 750



B. C. 4, to relieve ourselves of all doubt not only as to the 30th year of age commenced or complete, but also as to the one other unsettled question, whether our Lord was born in the year immediately preceding that of Herod's death, or earlier.

The two fixed points just referred to are divided by a period of 29 years. The 30th year merely commenced therefore is untenable, in as much as 30 years complete are required to span the interval between the baptism of our Saviour and the latest assignable year of his birth, viz. the year immediately preceding the death of Herod; and on the other hand, our Saviour could have been born in no earlier year than this without being 31 years of age at his Baptism, which would contradict the plain statement of St. Luke.

I trust therefore, that it may now be considered demonstrably evident that our Saviour was born in the year A. U. 749 B. C. 5, and that he was baptized in the year A. U. 779, A. D. 26 at *about* the full age of 30 years.

As a kind of corollary to this demonstration, it may be shown that our Saviour's birth took place in the latter part of the year, and certainly not at or near the time of the Passover, as some have been disposed to maintain, rather, I should say, from the imagined fitness of coincidence than from reasonable proof.

It is clear that St. John was born about six



months before our Saviour, and that his ministry commenced some considerable time, possibly the very same time, before our Saviour's baptism. Now if our Saviour was born and also baptized in the spring, the Baptist's birth and ministry must fall back to the preceding autumns, and his first preaching in the wilderness would thus be thrown completely out of the range of Pontius Pilate's government. For though we may fairly consider Pilate as procurator of Judæa from the time of his formal appointment at Rome, without pausing to calculate the probable duration of his voyage, yet we cannot place it further back than the early part of A. D. 26: and I think we may even recognise a providential arrangement in this critical and almost hairs-breadth adaptation of the commencement of Pilate's government to the other data of St. Luke. For if he had been sent to Judæa a year or two earlier, most of the dates which we have been considering, and which it is so important to calculate, would have been placed on a sort of sliding scale, which it would perhaps have been impossible satisfactorily to adjust, and that *reductio ad absurdum* would be completely foiled by which they may now be brought to their fixed points, from which there is no escape.

In short, to a reader duly cognizant of the facts alluded to, the sum of the main argument may be thus briefly stated:

The year B. C. 5 is the latest that can be assigned to the birth of Christ, consistently with



the data of St. Matthew ; and the year A.D. 26 is the earliest that can be assigned to his baptism consistently with the data of St. Luke.

But 30 complete years intervene between any corresponding season of these years respectively.

Therefore, *vice versa*, B. C. 5 becomes also the earliest year that can be assigned to the birth of Christ, and A. D. 26 the latest that can be assigned to his baptism, without impugning the testimony of St. Luke respecting his age.

Therefore once more inevitably and beyond contradiction Christ was born B. C. 5, and baptized A. D. 26.

I think, that whoever has attended to the steps by which this result has been attained, must perceive, that they have had no dependence whatever on the dates B. C. 4005 before assigned to the Creation, or that of B. C. 1005 assigned to the dedication of Solomon's Temple. Assuredly, when the plain evidences of Scripture and the Canon of Ptolemy first compelled me to place these and all the early dates of Sacred History one year earlier, than the commonly received Bible Chronology does, I had formed no judgment as to the probability or otherwise of the date of Christ's birth being found to follow them in the same proportion.

That it is now seen to do so is of course abundantly satisfactory, and so striking a coincidence can scarcely fail to increase the confidence with which I have ventured to consider myself to



have proceeded from sound premises to a just conclusion.

Having seen, however, that our Saviour's birth took place towards the latter part of the year, we have to inquire, how far the precise time of it can be ascertained. The established and traditional date appears open to many objections. Shepherds were not likely to be in the open fields watching their flocks by night towards the end of December; and it is perhaps still less probable, that the public measure of the census should be so arranged as to draw people from their houses at this season. Besides, if Herod died before the ensuing Passover, as it is assumed to have been proved, the interval is most inconveniently short for the Purification, the journey of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the after-proceedings of Herod, and his last sickness of perhaps two months' duration.

Sir Isaac Newton is inclined to suppose, that the early Christians, disregarding the niceties of exact date, found it convenient to calculate their chief feasts at the cardinal points of the year, as the Annunciation at the Vernal Equinox, the feast of John the Baptist at the Summer Solstice, that of St. Michael at the Autumnal Equinox, and the Nativity at the Winter Solstice, so that what was at first a mere arrangement of the Calendar passed at length for a tradition.

Be this as it may, few well-informed persons are now disposed to contend for Christmas as



the actual season of Christ's birth; the prevailing opinions being divided between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Passover, the latter however being really untenable for the reasons just now assigned.

As the Passover was marked by the Crucifixion of our Lord, and the Feast of Pentecost by the descent of the Holy Ghost, it cannot be considered unnatural to expect that the other great feasts of the Jews should have witnessed some other leading event connected with the Messiah's coming, and that it might probably have been at this sacred season "that the Word was made flesh and dwelt (*ἐσκήνωσεν*, dwelt as in a tabernacle) among us."

Again, if the 24 courses of the priests ever recovered their original order of succession, after the confusions consequent on the captivity, and that of Abia was still the eighth, which many suppose, though it cannot perhaps be distinctly shown; certainly Zacharia's week of office, reckoned from the Passover, may be supposed to have fallen in June, so that the birth of his promised son might very consistently take place in the following spring, and that of our Saviour by a necessary consequence in the autumn.

Further, that the Nativity should have occurred in the exact Millennary year, as reckoned both from the dedication of Solomon's Temple, and from the Creation of the world, is a coincidence so exceedingly striking, as to lead to the natural



expectation of a similar coincidence in the season also. Should any doubt remain as to the season of the Creation, there can at least be none that the dedication of the first Temple took place at the feast of Tabernacles.

Once more, if the most consistent interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel shall be found to place the Crucifixion in the midst of the closing week, the elapsed three years and a half point to the feast of Tabernacles as the opening of Christ's ministry at the age of 30 years, and by consequence as the season of his birth.

Lastly, if our Saviour's coming introduced that "acceptable year of the Lord", that "deliverance to the *spiritual* captives," that true Jubilee, which the typical year of release so aptly prefigured, the fixed day for the proclamation of the legal Jubilee, the great day of Atonement at the Feast of Tabernacles, can lead the mind but to one conclusion, whether we consider the type fulfilled, when the heavenly host announced the Redeemer's birth, or preferably when, after his baptism, the "voice from heaven" proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Without therefore claiming any direct proof, where none has been attained, I cannot but consider, that with reference to a scheme of Divine Revelation, so conspicuously and emphatically marked by type and antitype, and striking coincidence, often carrying with it an evidence ana-



logous to that arising from fulfilled prophecy, the circumstances adduced, tending, as they all do, by obvious analogy or reasonable conjecture to one point, may lead us to acquiesce in the highly probable conclusion, that the birth of Jesus Christ took place at or near the feast of Tabernacles in the year already ascertained, A.U. 749. B.C. 5.



## CHAPTER X.

### DURATION OF OUR SAVIOUR'S MINISTRY.

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THE next point which the great outline of Sacred Chronology requires to be ascertained is the duration of our Blessed Lord's Ministry, or, to speak more precisely, the time which elapsed between his Baptism and his Crucifixion, in order to settle beyond dispute the date of the latter.

My subject here in some measure connects itself with that of those Harmonies of the Four Gospels, which have been attempted, it is said, by nearly two hundred writers, and in each instance with some variety of result. An exact and satisfactory arrangement indeed of all the minor details of the Gospel narratives will, I presume, be generally admitted to be unattainable. And this may be said without the least disparagement to the importance of several most valuable and justly approved Harmonies, of which our Biblical students may avail themselves for every useful and practical purpose. My subject however only leads me to the consideration of



two much wider and less complicated questions, which nevertheless must lie at the basis of every attempt to construct a Harmony of the Gospels, and which, although great difference of opinion still exists with regard to them, admit, I conceive, of a completely satisfactory solution. One of these relates to the different order of time in which some leading events appear in St. Matthew's Gospel, from that which is observed by St. Mark and St. Luke, and to the choice which is to be made on this point between their authorities respectively; the other to the exact limits, which on a careful comparison of the accounts of all the Evangelists we may confidently assign to our Saviour's Ministry.

The first of these questions was met by Oslander at the period of the Reformation by the bold, and with him I believe, the original supposition (though Macknight and some few modern writers have adopted it), that all the Evangelists observed the exact order of time, and that where some very similar transactions related by them in a different order of succession have from their apparent identity led to the opposite conclusion, they are nevertheless really different transactions, which occurred in the order assigned to them respectively. Such an opinion however can scarcely stand the test of a calm consideration. For there are some transactions related so singular in themselves, in their circumstances, or in their connexion with other remarkable events



occurring at the same time, that their repetition in the same connexion utterly passes belief. That our Lord should have preached more than one sermon on a mountain near Capernaum, containing in both instances many of the same very peculiar topics and illustrations, may not perhaps appear altogether incredible; but that in both instances also he should immediately after its conclusion on entering Capernaum have met with a Centurion, who urged the cure of his sick servant by those striking arguments which evinced a faith pronounced by our Lord himself to be unexampled in Israel, quite exceeds the bounds of credibility.

Again, that our Lord should in two instances have miraculously stilled a storm on the sea of Tiberias, is perhaps not wholly inadmissible; but that on both occasions he should have landed on the same coast, and immediately have dispossessed a demoniac, and cast the evil spirits into a herd of swine, who were thus driven to perish in the waters, (a miracle in itself far too singular for its presumed repetition,) draws much too largely on our credulity.

Once more, the extremely unfrequent display of the stupendous miracle of raising the dead would lead us to doubt the repetition of restoring a damsel to life under precisely similar circumstances, and still more so when we found that she was the daughter of a ruler, whose suppliant application to Jesus in both instances occurred



all but critically at the moment of her decease ; but when we find also that his progress to her relief was in both instances interrupted by a woman who had suffered just twelve years from an issue of blood, and who received her cure on touching the hem of his garment, it may fairly be maintained that the assumed repetition of the whole combination in all its details sets the most unhesitating and determined credulity completely at defiance.

Now the instances here selected are placed by St. Matthew much earlier in the order of succession than they are by St. Mark and St. Luke ; so clearly so, that if we take as a line of demarcation the incident of plucking the ears of corn, which is recorded by all the three evangelists, an incident peculiar in itself, and still more important to chronology as marking the season of the year, they will be found to precede this in St. Matthew, and to come after it in St. Luke, and in St. Mark also so far as he records them. To which authority therefore are we to defer in the arrangement of the Gospel narrative ?

The opinion in favour of St. Matthew's order is far from being uncommon. Sir Isaac Newton prefers him as being an eyewitness ; bishop Marsh comes to a similar conclusion ; Campbell in his preface to St. Matthew's Gospel favours the idea of his at least keeping as near the order of time as any, though he does not think that it was the scope of any of the evangelists to adjust their narrative



to the precise order of time. Doddridge, on the other hand, argues, that two authorities are to be preferred to one, and remarks that St. Matthew does not assert the order of his narrative so precisely as St. Mark and St. Luke\*. Ussher, Lightfoot, Pilkington, Newcome, and his more modern followers adopt also the order of St. Mark and St. Luke. It must, one would think, be unlikely that St. Mark and St. Luke, writing after St. Matthew and obviously acquainted with his Gospel, should have ventured to deviate from his order without a cause. St. Luke moreover professes an intention of observing order in his narrative, and has given in the Acts of the Apostles a more easily ascertainable example of his disposition to do so.

But after all, the mere balancing of names and authorities and plausible arguments, though a preponderance in favour of one view may perhaps be fairly contended for, can scarcely lead to a generally satisfactory conclusion. There is however one special opportunity of comparing the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke, which will, I apprehend, enable us to decide this point beyond question or cavil. It is undeniably clear on the authority of St. Luke, that the miracle of healing the centurion's servant at Capernaum was performed on the very day, on the morning of which our Lord had ordained his twelve Apostles. St. Matthew records the same striking

\* Doddridge, Vol. III. Appendix, p. 6, 7.



miracle, and then in apparent order of succession relates the cure of Peter's wife's mother, the healing of diseases and casting out of devils among great multitudes, the stilling of the storm on the sea of Tiberias, the miracle of the demons and the herd of swine, the return across the sea to Capernaum, the cure of the sick of the palsy, and then his own call from the receipt of customs; thus placing his first call to be a disciple considerably later in the succession of events than an occurrence of the most prominent character, which unquestionably took place on the very day on which he was appointed to be an actual Apostle of Christ.

Let us not however for one moment regard this plain fact as any disparagement to the blessed evangelist, or suppose that his Gospel, if it should thus appear to indicate a classification of events rather according to their character than to their succession in time, is less available for the high purposes for which it was inspired. It is simply argued, and now I conceive incontestably proved, that in the minor matter of chronological arrangement we must seek another guide.

Some irregularities have also been objected to St. Mark and St. Luke; but these objections are at least for the most part rather specious than real, applying merely to a few anticipations and resumptions, such as the most regular and systematic historians can scarcely avoid, nay, are



even led to adopt as the very means of avoiding confusion and interruption. If St. Luke\*, for example, when giving an account of St. John's baptism, takes the opportunity of saying by anticipation, how he afterwards offended Herod, and was cast into prison; and if St. Mark†, on the other hand, while speaking of his being beheaded by Herod, then explains by resumption the train of circumstances which led to it; they are rather giving proof of their desire to avoid interrupting the main thread of their narrative by repeated digression, than betraying any carelessness with regard to the orderly succession of events, and in fact are leading no one to false conclusions in that respect.

Without claiming however for these evangelists that minute exactness of arrangement in every particular which was scarcely perhaps within their own view, I would merely urge as incontrovertibly proved, that those, whose object it is to produce as near an approximation to a correct harmony of the Gospel narratives as the case will admit, must take St. Mark and St. Luke, and not St. Matthew, as their authority for the regular succession of events. I have pressed this conclusion and the grounds of it the more earnestly on the attention of my readers, not because, beyond a certain point at least, it affects the broader question which I have in view, and which concerns a scheme of entire years rather than the

\* Luke iii. 19, 20.

† Mark vi. 14, 30.



regular distribution of occurrences within those years, and which after all rests on proofs which are independent of the most conflicting estimates of the true order of the evangelical narratives; but because the question which has been discussed, though of material concern to a harmony of the Gospels, is one on which harmonists are still at issue, and because those of them who have adopted what I consider the correct alternative seem to have done so, as far at least as I have observed, more from the apparent balance of reason, probability, and authority in favour of the order of St. Mark and St. Luke, than from any such absolute and undoubting conviction of the chronological deviation of St. Matthew, as I have laboured to justify and establish.

We come now to the more important question of the duration of our Saviour's Ministry. The Christians of the early centuries appear to have believed that it extended to one year only.—The three first Gospels concur in dating our Lord's ministry from his return to Galilee after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and as they thenceforward make no allusion whatever to the occurrence of any of the great Jewish feasts, or even to our Saviour's presence at Jerusalem at all till the Passover at which he suffered, it seems to have been hastily concluded that the recorded acts of his ministry were comprised within the limits of a year. It may be observed too, that even when St. John's Gospel brought to



notice that first Passover, which so distinctly marked the true opening of his ministry by the authoritative purging of the Temple from secular profanations, this would add but a very few weeks to the account, so that, though it must evidently have included two Passovers, its duration might still be reckoned at about a year as before. St. John's Gospel however, when viewed as it ought to be in its supplementary relation to the rest, eventually led chronologers to a different conclusion. And the limitation of our Lord's ministry to two Passovers, though not absolutely without advocates in more modern times, (Mann and Priestly are usually cited as such,) may well be considered as wholly untenable, and in fact contradictory to the express testimony of St. John, who distinctly states that a Passover was just at hand when our Saviour performed the miracle of feeding the 5000.

A few, such as sir Isaac Newton, Pilkington, Wells and Macknight, extend it to five Passovers; but the Gospel narratives, if they do not absolutely negative this supposition, appear to afford it no natural or intelligible support. By far the most prevailing opinion of modern harmonists is that which assigns four Passovers, that is three full years, to our Lord's ministry. Looking to St. John's Gospel for that chronological outline which the other three Gospels fail to supply, they of course find three Passovers distinctly named as such, and intermediately between the first of these



and the one which he asserts to have been nigh, when the 5000 were miraculously fed, they find our Saviour present at a feast, which, though simply called *ἑόρτη*\* (*a feast*), is generally deemed to have been a Passover.

That it *certainly* was so, I have met with no satisfactory proof, and am disposed to think, that those who make the question of a three years' ministry hinge on proving it, are gratuitously weakening their argument. Weaker still however is the argument of those who maintain, on the other hand, the hypothesis of only a two years' ministry, because they find that St. John records no events between the two first Passovers, which he expressly names as such, which could have occupied two years. Undoubtedly this is true as to St. John. Our Lord's sojourn in Judæa after the first Passover, his return through Samaria and Galilee, and one or two early events of his ministry there, require at the utmost a very few weeks, and the transactions at the feast (whatever feast it may have been), which was marked by the miracle at the pool of Bethesda, were apparently the transactions of a single day. St. John therefore scarcely relates what could have occupied two months, much less two years, during the interval in question. But it is a fact, quite beyond contradiction, that his Gospel is in the main supplementary to the other three; that he for the most part omits what they record,

\* John v. 1.



and supplies what they omit, of which last the few weeks' transactions just referred to are a plain instance. The question therefore is, whether these supplementary particulars together with the transactions recorded by the other evangelists during the interval of which I am speaking may be shewn to have occupied two years rather than one; this being precisely the time which elapsed between the Passover which is marked by our Lord's interview with Nicodemus, and that which St. John declares to have been nigh when the miracle of feeding the 5000 was performed. This miracle, be it observed, is one of the very few instances in which all the four Evangelists narrate the same event, and thus affords us a special advantage, where the object is, as at present, to bring them to a chronological parallel.

Looking then to all the four Evangelists for the transactions which we have to arrange between these recorded Passovers, and noticing not only their actual abundance, but the plain fact also that not one of the Gospels presents us with a narrative unbroken in continuity or even free from very considerable instances of omission and hiatus, I think that most careful readers, unbiassed by authority or hypothesis, would suppose these transactions to have occupied much more than a single year. But when we find, on the other hand, (not indeed the majority of harmonists, but still) many of approved learning and judgment arriving at the opposite conclusion, and (as Town-



send and Benson for example) arranging the occurrences in question within the limits of a year, recognising also, as we must, the extreme liability of transactions artlessly narrated without reference to time to be expanded or contracted in accommodation to a previously conceived hypothesis, and often too without leaving us the means of absolutely confuting even an extravagant improbability, we must perceive that the question before us might for ever remain an open one, as indeed it appears to be very generally considered, unless some opportunity were found of arriving at a satisfactory solution of the case very different from any to which I have yet adverted.

I do not hesitate however to assert that we have such an opportunity of arriving even at demonstrative evidence on the matter in question in the remarkable fact, recorded in the three first Gospels, of our Lord's disciples walking through the corn fields and plucking the ears of corn. This at all events indicates a season of the year closely bordering on a Passover, and it only remains to disconnect it satisfactorily from the two Passovers of which I have been speaking.

St. Luke indeed places the transaction on a day which he designates by a very peculiar phrase, which in the opinion of most commentators fixes it to the Passover week; and it is well worth our while to give this point a brief consideration, though its demonstrative solution is



by no means necessary to that of the wider question at issue. The phrase adverted to “ἐν σαββάτῳ” “δευτεροπρώτῳ” has occasioned much difference of opinion amongst commentators. And though some of the best have arrived at the same conclusion as to the day indicated, viz. that it is the first Sabbath after the offering of the wave-sheaf, they still differ in their mode of accounting for the peculiar expression. Scaliger, whose guess has been by many deemed a happy one, appears to have explained it from the fact of the wave-sheaf being offered on the *second* day of unleavened bread, thus accounting for the first half of the compound word. Suidas mentions one opinion which perhaps makes a nearer approach to what is satisfactory, “Σάββατον δὲ δευτερόπρωτον, ἐπειδὴ “δεύτερον μὲν ἦν τοῦ Πάσχα, πρῶτον δὲ τῶν Ἀζύμων;” and if instead of merely intimating that, though it was the second Sabbath from the Passover, it was the first in the days of unleavened bread, he had gone on to say that it was the first of the series of the seven Sabbaths by which the Pentecost was calculated, his meaning, if indeed he had such a meaning, would have been more clear. In fact if the Sabbaths between the Passover and Pentecost were strictly counted, they must be (except in the occasional coincidence of the Passover with a Sabbath) eight in number, and unless the *second* of these were allowed to retain in some sort its character of *first*, the remainder of the series would be confused. I think therefore



that the term δευτεροπρώτον (*second first*, which implies a *previous first*) in a manner tells its own tale, and very happily expresses the state of the case, and guards against the confusion adverted to. And this reason for adopting the expression would be much the same, whether, with the Karaites, the wave-sheaf were offered on the day after the ordinary Sabbath, or, with the Rabbinites, on the day after the Sabbath extraordinary, which the first day of unleavened bread was held to be on whatever day of the actual week it might chance to occur\*. But there is another interpretation of the σάββατον δευτεροπρώτον, which makes it mean the day of Pentecost falling on a Sabbath. Hammond adopts and explains this after Grotius, whose idea seems to be that taking πρῶτον in the sense of μέγα, and assuming that the coincidence of either of the three grand feasts with a Sabbath made it a prime or great Sabbath, the Passover combined with a Sabbath would make a πρωτοπρώτον (first prime Sabbath), a Pentecost falling on a Sabbath would make a δευτεροπρώτον, and so on. Now admitting some ingenuity in the guess, it has met with, and probably deserves, no general approval, though it has naturally met with some favour from those who (like Townsend) suppose that the plucking of the ears of corn took place in the same season as the Passover mentioned in John ii, and imagine that all which the Gospels record between these two

\* Relandi Antiquitates Sacrae, par. IV. cap. iv. sect. 4.



events might have occurred between the Passover and Pentecost. This question obviously involves the difference of one whole year in the duration of our Saviour's ministry. It specially concerns my present object to establish, if possible, with demonstrative certainty, on which side the truth lies. The supplementary account in St. John gives us a Passover at which our Saviour attended; a sojourn in Judæa of undefined duration, whilst our Saviour or his disciples baptized there, and John was doing the same at Ænon; a journey through Samaria with attendant incidents; and a continuation of the journey to Cana in Galilee, where was performed the *second* miracle in Galilee, the healing of the nobleman's son who was sick at Capernaum. Here ends St. John's supplementary relation, which clearly falls in with the commencement of our Saviour's ministry in Galilee after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Of the early part of the ministry the accounts given by the other three evangelists are very general. Apparently the first particular precisely recorded is the visit to Nazareth, and the memorable reference to the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy in the synagogue there. Other synagogues may possibly have been previously visited, and some so interpret the general expressions in the preceding verses\*. But there is something in the very nature of this formal announcement of the acceptable year of the Lord,

\* Luke iv. 14, 15.



which looks so like an introductory address, something (if one may reverentially suppose it) so natural in the selection of the city of our blessed Saviour's human education and early life for the first formal announcement of these glad tidings in Galilee, that I am much disposed to imagine that he proceeded at once from Cana to Nazareth; the Greek word *ὅσα* (whatsoever), though a plural, being, according to the well understood idiom of the language in many similar cases, no absolute bar to the supposition. This immediate succession of the visit to Nazareth to that to Cana is of course the most favourable to the theory of those who advocate the shorter calculation of our Lord's ministry; and I think the lapse of time will be the most clearly apprehended by counting the Sabbath days as far as they can be ascertained or guessed at.

The teaching in the Synagogue at Nazareth then was of course on a Sabbath, and from this as a fixed point we may conveniently reckon backwards and forwards. The first Sabbath after the offering of the wave-sheaf, allowing time for the conference with Nicodemus, may probably have found our Lord still in Jerusalem, though, if it fell late in the Passover week, he might perhaps have been already with his disciples baptizing in Judæa. Three weeks or a month can scarcely be deemed more than sufficient to account for the notoriety of his success, and for the observation of the Pharisees that



he made and baptized more disciples than John. He tarried (*διέτριβε*, made some stay,) in Judæa; and John was baptizing in Ænon, because there was much water there, which seems to imply, that it was becoming scarcer in other parts from the advance of the dry season after the Passover. But on the other hand it is urged by Priestly, that it would require no long time to awaken the jealousy of the Pharisees, and that a week or ten days might suffice; so, as the time is after all undefined, let us for argument's sake, and granting what is possible rather than what is probable, allow that only one more sabbath was passed in Judæa. The journey through Samaria to Cana, a distance of about 70 miles, including two days passed at Sychar would require 5 or 6 days; our Lord's stay at Cana must have allowed time for its becoming known to the nobleman at Capernaum, for his arrival, and return home, and it was not till the day after he left Cana that his servants met him with the welcome news of his son's recovery, and of its miraculous coincidence with our Lord's promise; allow another day for this miracle to have become notorious at Nazareth, and it will appear that 4 days must have elapsed between the arrival of Jesus in Cana and the allusion to this miracle on the Sabbath day in Nazareth. It is manifest therefore, that the preceding Sabbath, wherever passed, could not possibly have been passed in Judæa, and that the Sabbath at



Nazareth must have been at least the 4th from the Passover. To suppose less than this is to allow only the Sabbath of Passover week to the stay in Jerusalem and Judæa both inclusive, and to put all tarrying in Judæa with its attendant consequences quite out of the question. After the escape of our Lord from his unbelieving and exasperated fellow-townsmen, there is no reason to suppose that he lost any time in proceeding to Capernaum. St. Matthew says, that he came and dwelt there (*κατῴκησεν*), which implies a considerable stay then or afterwards, probably both. Newcome thinks 3 weeks probable at this time. St. Luke, according to our translation, says he taught them on the Sabbath days: but the Greek expression *ἐν τοῖς σάββασι* is ambiguous; though a plural, it is found sometimes to mean a single Sabbath, and is so used by him elsewhere\*. So that whatever may have been the number of Sabbaths which really elapsed, there is no certain record of more than one. Let us then admit as possible, that the call of the four disciples took place in the week of his arrival, and that the cure of the Demoniac in the Synagogue, and of Peter's mother-in-law afterwards, as well as of the multitudes who crowded to him in the evening, occurred on the one Sabbath of his stay in Capernaum, the day preceding that on which he retired to a desert place, and commenced his circuit of Galilee. Here then at the very least

\* Luke xiii. 10.



we have arrived at the fifth Sabbath of the seven preceding the Pentecost, and we have but two to account for. We next find our Lord going round all Galilee teaching in their synagogues (that is on Sabbath days); no longer a doubtful plural this, and yet we must reduce it to an unit to satisfy the theory in question; for the second of these Sabbaths is the very day of Pentecost, which is claimed for the miracle at the pool of Bethesda, and for the plucking of the ears of corn; and this after allowing time for a return to Capernaum, for the call of Matthew, and for a three-days' journey to Jerusalem.

It is superfluous to say therefore, that the scheme of time which depends on identifying the deuteroprote Sabbath with the day of Pentecost completely fails. But supposing that the advocates for the reduced calculation of our Saviour's ministry may have incautiously weakened their argument by adopting this interpretation of the deuteroprote Sabbath, and that by assuming that the miracle of Bethesda took place on the Feast of Pentecost they have gratuitously embarrassed themselves, (as I conceive that all do, who make the duration of our Lord's ministry turn or even depend at all on satisfactorily identifying the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in John v. either with the Passover or the Pentecost,) let us for argument's sake still further concede, that all the attempts to explain the deuteroprote Sabbath are mere conjectures, on which no reliance can



be placed; that the expression, though we know not how or why, may possibly indicate some Sabbath shortly after the Pentecost, while there might remain still some ears of corn to be plucked; that we are not called upon to allow the time required for a visit to Jerusalem, for that there is really no proof at all that our Saviour was really there at this Pentecost; and that the ears of corn might have been plucked in Galilee. So that thus a week or two more might by possibility be gained, during which to arrange the transactions of this circuit. Our attention therefore is next called to the time necessarily occupied by the circuit itself. Townsend thinks a tour of about 70 miles during about 14 days sufficient for the purpose. But not to mention, that his scheme if closely traced allows of nothing like 14 days, thus hastily assumed to remain before the call of Matthew and the journey to Jerusalem, it is obvious that he must assume some such case, as a thinly populated district with two cities of chief importance, whose synagogues might be selected for preaching the Gospel on the two Sabbath days, while the intermediate days might be employed in instructing the inhabitants of the lesser towns and villages lying in the immediate line of progress. But how does this accord with the then condition of Galilee and the plain testimony of the Evangelists? Galilee, though small in geographical extent, not exceeding perhaps 60 miles in length



and a third less perhaps in breadth, (which has no doubt led to these hasty conclusions,) contained a population dense beyond all ordinary precedent. Of Palestine\*, which in those days numbered more inhabitants in proportion to its surface than almost any of the neighbouring countries, Galilee was certainly the most populous portion. According to Josephus† no part of it was left uncultivated, and the numerous towns and villages were so populous owing to the fertility of the soil, that the least of them contained more than 15,000 inhabitants. These towns and villages are elsewhere‡ stated as amounting to 204; and without supposing all these to be quite so populous as before asserted, and making every reasonable allowance for exaggeration, we may well doubt whether 10 or 12 Sabbaths, rather than two, could possibly suffice in such a country as this for preaching in the Synagogues of those leading cities which would be of course selected. Our Lord, when importuned not to depart from Capernaum, replied, "I must preach the kingdom of God in other cities also, for therefore am I sent:" and it is plainly stated by St. Matthew and St. Mark, that this was done "throughout the whole of Galilee." The time thus employed may be still further inferred from the widely

\* Strabo xvi. p. 1079, Oxford 1807. καὶ δὴ καὶ εὐάνδρησεν οὗτος ὁ τόπος ὥστ' ἐκ τῆς πλησίον κώμης Ἰαμνείας καὶ τῶν κατοικιῶν τῶν κύκλῳ τέτταρας μυριάδας ὀπλίζεσθαι.

† Joseph. Bell. III. iii.

‡ Ibid. Vit. 45.



extended results of his preaching and miraculous cures. For "his fame went through all Syria," and "there followed him great multitudes of people" "from Galilee and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan." As there can, I suppose, be no question that the general omission of detail has mainly contributed to this oversight as to the extent both of range and time, which these undetailed miracles and discourses necessarily occupied, a reference to one miracle, with regard to which more particulars are recorded, will be found to have some bearing on the calculation of time which we are now considering.

The miracle of cleansing the leper appears above all others wrought at this period to have excited the wonder of the people, and to have acquired even an undesirable notoriety, so much so that "Jesus could no more openly enter the" "city (some city of Galilee), but was without it" "in desert places." If this occurred during the first great circuit of Galilee, it caused a temporary interruption, and so far a prolongation of the circuit; if, as is more probable, on some other visit to the country after the first return to Capernaum, it becomes an addition to the time to be allowed. In either case it at all events preceded the call of Levi with its attendant circumstances, and the plucking of the ears of corn; in either case therefore it places the abridged calculation of our Lord's ministry more



than ever out of all possible question. I trust I need go no further without claiming to have made it demonstrably evident, that the plucking of the ears of corn did not belong to the same season as that in which our Lord and his disciples sojourned and baptized in Judæa after the Passover, and that, the existence of ripe corn evincing a season not very remote from a Passover, we have at all events about a year within which to distribute those occurrences, which others in support of an untenable theory have laboured to compress within the limits of about 7 weeks.

Having arrived at this conclusion, I think the probability of our Saviour having sojourned as much as a month baptizing in Judæa will scarcely be disputed; that this sojourn was prolonged 7 or 8 months to the approach of winter, as some suppose from interpreting his expression\*, "Say  
"not ye, There are yet four months, and then  
"cometh harvest?" to mark the season of the year in which they were uttered, I regard as highly improbable; such a prolonged exposure to the malignant jealousy of the Scribes and Pharisees at this early stage of his ministry would be quite inconsistent with many recorded instances of very opposite policy; and little as the Evangelists aim at a complete and continuous narrative, such an hiatus as this in their account of the Lord's ministry would appear most unwarrantable. The allusion, which immediately follows, to the fields

\* John iv. 35.



“white already to harvest” is far more likely to indicate the actual season, though perhaps after all the whole allusion is merely to a well-known proverb employed to illustrate the assurance to the disciples, that an abundant harvest of converts was already ripe to their hands. Besides, the formal announcement of the acceptable year of the Lord at Nazareth seems to forbid the supposition of any great advance in the year thus strikingly indicated; so that on the whole I am disposed to think, that the day of Pentecost had not arrived when our Lord commenced his more settled abode at Capernaum. I before suggested, that St. Matthew’s expression “dwelt (κατῴκησε) “at Capernaum” implied an extended residence either before or after the first circuit of Galilee, or both, and we are now, I presume, in a condition to recal that barely possible concession, which was temporarily made to the claim of an adverse argument, and to assert the obvious probability that, before the circuit of Galilee commenced, some time was passed in this newly chosen place of our Lord’s earthly sojourn. And that here also were passed those intervals of less active ministry, which the winter season or various circumstances might suggest, seems quite consistent with the incidental notices of Scripture:—it was the abode of some of his chief disciples; it was the centre of the highly-favoured region to which his divine instructions were successively imparted; it acquired the title of “his



“own city;” and it was as an inhabitant of Capernaum that he was called upon to pay tribute.

Allowing therefore for several weeks' previous stay at Capernaum, we may fairly suppose the first, which was also a complete, circuit of Galilee to have been protracted to about the feast of Tabernacles. There is no detailed succession of particulars, with which we can fill up the remaining half of the first year of our Lord's Ministry. That it was passed partly in visits to different parts of Galilee, and partly, especially in the winter season, in a more settled residence at Capernaum, appears most probable. Among the intimations of his presence there after the first circuit I am much disposed to class St. Luke's account of the final call of his four chief disciples in connexion with the miraculous draught of fishes. Though, I believe, most harmonists are of a different opinion, I think Greswell has very successfully shewn this to be a distinct transaction from their call as related by St. Matthew\* and St. Mark†. According to them, they were preparing to fish, according to St. Luke, they had given up fishing after a night of unsuccessful toil. In the former instance our Lord was walking along the shore, and addressed Peter and Andrew first, and after proceeding further, James and John; in the latter he was on board of Peter's ship, and they were all four engaged in securing the miraculous draught of fishes. In the first case there is no

\* Matt. iv. 18. 21.

† Mark i. 14. 16.



notice taken at all of an assembled multitude, in the last there was such a concourse of people as forced him to go on board the ship to address them with more convenience, which was not probable before his fame had been more widely disseminated than it could have been at the presumed period of the transaction related by St. Matthew and St. Mark. There is also much more of the appearance of a final call in St. Luke: "From henceforth" (ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν), said our Lord, "thou shalt catch men: and when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook *all*, and followed him\*." In short, the former call appears to have been an invitation to attend him as disciples in common with many others, some of whom afterwards ceased to follow him; the latter a summons to that closer attendance on their Master, involving a final renunciation of their worldly calling, and leading to their appointment as apostles strictly so called. It is quite natural therefore that it should have occurred, as St. Luke has placed it, at a later period of the Ministry, and very improbable that he should thus have deviated from St. Mark's order of time, with which he so regularly concurs, if he had not been relating a different transaction.

St. Luke places still later the cleansing of the leper near some city of Galilee, which detaches it, as before suggested, from the transactions of the first circuit; and our Lord is again at Capernaum,

\* Luke v. 10, 11.



when he healed the paralytic who was let down through the uncovered roof, and soon after called St. Matthew from the receipt of custom. Whether we are entitled to close the account of this first year of our Lord's Ministry, or rather to commence the second, by assuming, with so many harmonists, that he attended the Passover at Jerusalem, and at that feast performed the miracle which St. John describes at the pool of Bethesda, I have met with no argument which enables me to determine.

The transactions at the feast, which St. John indefinitely mentions as *a* feast, are all that he relates of our Saviour's Ministry in the interval between his return to Galilee after the first Passover and the miracle of feeding the 5000 when the Passover was just approaching; a period of time, which, as may already have been perceived, at all events approaches to two years. Our choice therefore lies in the first instance between seven feasts, one Passover, and two of each of the rest. The two feasts of Dedication may, I conceive, be at once dismissed, as belonging to the winter season, in which no assemblage of sick people at the pool of Bethesda could be looked for; and the first of the two Pentecosts may be considered as out of the question, after what we have already traced of our Saviour's proceedings at that time. Moreover in his answer to the cavils of the Jews after the performance of this miracle he holds out to them the



expectation of greater works than these, and adds the following striking declaration, "Verily, " verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and " *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of " the Son of God: and they that hear shall " live\*." Whence it has been inferred by some, and, I think, very justly, that up to this time he had not exercised that stupendous display of Divine power, the raising of the dead to life, but that the time of his doing so was *now close at hand*. The first instance recorded is the raising of the widow's son at Nain†, which plainly occurred on the very day after the ordination of the twelve apostles. This ordination was not very long (though apparently several weeks) after the plucking of the ears of corn; the intermediate transactions being the cure on a Sabbath day of the man with the withered hand, and a consequent retirement from the evil designs of his enemies, during which for an undefined, but probably no very lengthened, period he instructed the multitudes along the sea shore of Galilee. We may thus at once discard both the feasts of Tabernacles from the discussion, the one being much too early to be consistent with our Lord's declaration, and the other plainly too late. Our choice therefore finally lies between the Passover and the Pentecost, and though on the one hand there appears no certainty that so many weeks had elapsed before the miracle, as

\* John v. 25.

† Luke vii. 11.



to make our Lord's expression "the hour *now* is" inconsistent with the ordinary use of language, if uttered at the Passover, yet on the other hand, no one from the data of Gospel Narratives can well be confident that the time which elapsed did not overpass the day of Pentecost; and if it did, it was at the latter feast that our Lord wrought the miracle at the pool of Bethesda. It is by some, I believe, supposed in favour of this feast being a Passover, that the day of Pentecost was probably selected by our Lord as peculiarly appropriate to the solemn ordination of his twelve Apostles; but this idea is perhaps more than met by another, viz. that as we find him to have attended each of the other feasts of the Jews, it is not probable that he should have failed to confer the like sanction on the Pentecost. But both these suppositions, however plausible they may severally appear, must be allowed to be wholly gratuitous, and I am inclined to agree with Newcome, who, though he prefers the Passover and arranges his harmony accordingly, allows that "the supposition, that this was the "feast of Pentecost after the second Passover in "our Lord's Ministry, can not be disproved\*."

Leaving therefore this as a doubtful point, I have only to remark that the question of the duration of our Lord's Ministry remains wholly unaffected by the doubt; the plucking of the ears of corn after the transactions, which have been

\* Newcome, p. 16, notes.



shewn to precede it, completely proving the advent of a new season bordering on the feasts of the Passover and the Pentecost, whether our Lord attended the one, or the other, or neither, if so it might be.

That another year had passed before the Passover, which St. John tells us was nigh at hand when the miracle of feeding the 5000 was performed, requires no laboured proof. Whatever may have been inconsiderately argued from the absence of all intermediate detail in St. John's Gospel, the three other Evangelists, who all record this miracle, obviously supply it in abundance, and though some, in compliance with the demands of a pertinacious theory, have been forced to argue against the most unquestionable authority, that the words which assert the approach of a Passover are an interpolation, it is satisfactory to perceive, that even were this really a doubtful point, it would avail them nothing, for the description of the grass on which the multitudes sat, the fresh and verdant herbage of spring (τῷ χλωρῷ χόρτῳ\*), is quite decisive of the recurrence of the season supposed in a climate like that of Palestine; and moreover, this grass could not possibly be the early produce of the year in which our blessed Saviour suffered. Obvious as this must appear in many ways to those who are acquainted with the Gospel narratives, I will merely suggest the decisive fact of

\* Mark vi. 39.



his intermediate presence at the feast of Tabernacles and the Dedication.

I consider it therefore demonstrably evident, that our blessed Lord's Ministry lasted three full years. That it lasted no more, is by far the most natural and certainly the most prevailing conclusion ; though if we were called upon to prove it to demonstration from the Gospels alone, I apprehend that it would be found very difficult, if not impracticable. It is a highly probable opinion, that when our Lord spoke of seeking fruit for three years from the barren fig-tree, he alluded to his three years' visitation of the Jewish nation ; but it would be too much to assume that this affords a conclusive proof of the duration of his Ministry. When sir Isaac Newton, who with a few others reckons five Passovers in our Saviour's Ministry, argues from his words : "Say not ye, "There are yet four months, and then cometh "harvest\*?" that the winter season had actually arrived when he passed through Samaria towards Galilee ; and when he also supposes that when the twelve Apostles were sent out by our Saviour to preach the kingdom of God †, they did not return to him for a full year, we may well think it highly improbable that eight months were employed in baptizing in Judæa, and next to impossible that the twelve Apostles should have been absent twelve months from the personal instruction of their Divine Master. But with so

\* John iv. 35.

† Luke ix. 2.



much of incomplete detail and several instances of undoubted hiatus observable in all the Evangelists, the exact amount of time referred to cannot be distinctly proved from their narratives alone. Moreover when our Bible Chronology, after Ussher, assumes that our Saviour after his Baptism retired for three years before he commenced his active Ministry, we may deem it a very unnatural supposition, and may even be aware of the peculiar view of the Prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel which led to its adoption, and yet find ourselves unable to point out where the Gospel History clearly contradicts it.

We cannot therefore, so far as I have been able to perceive, establish beyond dispute by the unaided evidence of the Gospels themselves either the duration of our Lord's Ministry or the date of its actual commencement. Two points however I trust we may now venture to bear in mind as undeniably established; that our Saviour's baptism having taken place A. D. 26, the first passover of his ministry could not have been earlier than that of A. D. 27; and that two intervening Passovers having been clearly made out, the Passover at which he suffered could not have been earlier than that of A. D. 30. That they did not take place later remains to be seen, and may, I trust, be quite satisfactorily shewn by arguments more immediately connected with the Chronology of the Acts of the Apostles.



## CHAPTER XI.

### CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

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NOTHING can well be imagined more vague and unsettled than the present state of opinion with regard to the Chronology of the Acts of the Apostles. Even on such leading events as the Conversion of St. Paul, his visits to Jerusalem, his arrival at Rome &c., Chronologers are not agreed within 5 or 6 years or more, and the intervening transactions as well as the conjectural dates of the Epistles of course fall into similar confusion and uncertainty. Perfect accuracy on some of these points is apparently unattainable, but they are such as are happily unimportant to the main scheme of Chronology. Nevertheless a near approximation to the truth must be considered desirable even in these, and may, it is conceived, be satisfactorily attained, when once the dates of real importance are fairly established.

The leading source of difficulty and consequent error in arranging the Chronology of the Acts arises from the remarkable fact, that there is but one date throughout the whole narrative, which



we are enabled to establish with strict accuracy by a simple reference to contemporary history, viz., that of the death of Herod Agrippa, which we learn from Josephus to have occurred in the 4th year of Claudius A. D. 44; and which took place at the time of the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with alms on the occasion of the then prevailing famine.

Another fruitful source of error however is the peculiar interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel already adverted to, which defers the date of the Crucifixion to A.D. 33, thus rendering it impossible to identify St. Paul's visit to Jerusalem "after *fourteen years*," which he speaks of in his Epistle to the Galatians\*, with this visit of A. D. 44. The general resource is to identify it with his attendance at the council of Jerusalem†, the exact date of which is, so far as I can discover, somewhat uncertain; and this uncertainty has been taken full advantage of by contending theorists, involving, as it unfortunately does, the liberty also of placing St. Paul's conversion either soon after, or not till several years after the Crucifixion, and of altering the date even of the Crucifixion itself as their various theories require. The endless confusion and discordance of Chronological arrangement, which is thus occasioned, needs no further illustration.

My readers may now probably perceive at a glance, that the verification of A. D. 44 as the

\* Gal. ii. 2.

† Acts xv.



date of St. Paul's visit to Jerusalem with the alms, together with a satisfactory proof of its identity with the visit "after 14 years", (viz. 14 years after his conversion,) must inevitably overturn every theory, which brings down the date of the Crucifixion lower than A. D. 30 ; a conclusion so important to our scheme of Chronology, that the proofs on which it rests demand the closest investigation.

First then with regard to the Cardinal date A.D. 44, as established by the authority of Josephus for the year of the death of Herod Agrippa. We find him at Rome enjoying the personal regard of Caligula, and almost immediately after his accession to the empire in March A.D. 37, raised to the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, and two or three years afterwards to that also of his uncle Herod Antipas. He chanced to be again at Rome at the time of Caligula's death Jan. 24, A. D. 41, and by his encouragement and prudent counsel was even mainly instrumental in securing the succession to Claudius. His recompense on this occasion was the addition of the kingdom of Judæa and Samaria, which finally put him in possession of the full sovereignty of his grandfather Herod the Great, and fostered in him that pride of power, of which we read the awful termination in the Acts, as also in still more detail in Josephus.

At the time of his proceeding from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, Josephus says that the third year



of his reign over all Judæa was now *completed* (πεπλήρωτο)\*, an exactness of expression which clearly carries us at the least to the spring of A. D. 44. Almost immediately afterwards however in relating his death, he says less definitely, that he was in the seventh year of his reign (τῆς βασιλείας ἑβδομον ἔτος ἄγων)\*, which might have been true had he reigned but little more than six years. The first conclusion however is amply restored by his going on to explain that he reigned four years under Caius Cæsar, and three more (τρεις δὲ ἐπιλάβων\*) under Claudius. The four years however must have been incomplete by perhaps three months, Caligula having reigned only three years and 10 months, and this perhaps may help to account for the looser calculation of Josephus in the "Wars," which states, that he reigned as king *three years*, after having governed *three* as tetrarch†. At all events however the three years of his kingly reign are in each of these instances regularly maintained, and I should argue that whatever may be said of the occasional ambiguity of the round numbers of Josephus, he leaves us on the whole no room to doubt that the death of Herod Agrippa took place in A. D. 44.

This inference may also receive some confirmation from the close connexion in point of time observable in the Acts‡ between the visit of Paul

\* Josephus Antiq. XIX. viii. 2. † Joseph. Bell. II. xi. 6.

‡ Acts xi. and xii.



and Barnabas with the alms and Herod's persecution of the Church, which last in the particular instance at least of Peter's imprisonment took place precisely at Easter. Herod proceeds immediately to Cæsarea, where he dies apparently not long afterwards. How long afterwards might be much more doubtful than it is, but that the departure of Paul and Barnabas "when they "had fulfilled their ministry\*", which could have lasted at the utmost but a very few weeks, follows still later in the narrative, thus confining the time of Herod's death almost to the Easter season, but certainly *not* the Easter of A. D. 43, as that would have made it impossible for Josephus to have assigned him a three years' reign even on the loosest estimate. Should there remain any hesitation in admitting the certainty of the all-important date A. D. 44, let it only await the full demonstration which is yet in reserve, but which will find its more appropriate place in a further stage of the argument.

We have next to identify if we can St. Paul's visit after 14 years, which he refers to in his Epistle to the Galatians†, with that of the alms in A. D. 44 recorded by St. Luke in the Acts‡. The most natural process, that of noting the points of resemblance in each account, would probably avail us little, as from the different objects in view of these writers respectively they are few in number, and not remarkably obvious,

\* Acts xii. 25.

† Gal. ii. 2.

‡ Acts xi. 30



though some of the particulars may be found worthy of notice presently. Instead of this however we have only to show, that the visit after 14 years was really the second after his conversion, because if so, it was either the second recorded in the Acts, which took place in A. D. 44, or some earlier and unrecorded one; which last supposition is manifestly impossible without making St. Paul's conversion precede A. D. 30, already proved to be the earliest assignable date of the crucifixion.

It will be seen that St. Paul's object in writing to the Galatians was to warn them against being misled by false teachers to desert the doctrine which he had taught them, and that he accordingly labours to assure them, that it was not of man, but strictly a Divine Revelation\*, nay more, that it was in his case a personal revelation, and not even derived from those that were Apostles before him†. He shews therefore, that on his conversion he "conferred not with flesh and blood ‡," but retired to Arabia; that when he went to Jerusalem after three years to see Peter, he stayed but fifteen days and saw no other Apostle except "James the Lord's brother §:" and then solemnly appealing to God for the truth of his assertions, he adds that he went into Syria and Cilicia, and was personally unknown to the Churches of Judæa ||. Then, says he, (ἐπειτα,

\* Gal. i. 11, 12.

† Ibid. 17.

‡ Ibid. 16.

§ Ibid. 18.

|| Ibid. 22.



clearly the next visit in order,) after 14 years I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas \*. Now what I maintain is this, that the stress which St. Paul lays on this absence of all such intercourse with the Apostles as could have affected his doctrine, coupled with his unquestionable candour and veracity, preclude the possibility of supposing any intermediate visit, and I am convinced that no unprejudiced and careful reader of the passage could come to any other conclusion. His expressions, in fact, when taken together, are tantamount to a solemn asseveration that he never saw Jerusalem in the interval.

The general leaning of opinion in a different direction only shews the inextricable difficulties into which men are led by obstinate theories. For certainly, if St. Paul's conversion took place several years after the crucifixion, or, what comes to the same thing, if the crucifixion itself took place after the year A. D. 30, (and the great majority of chronologers, I believe, hold one or both of these opinions,) then the visit "after 14 years" could not possibly be the visit with alms in A. D. 44. When then did it occur? Almost all commentators say, at the council recorded in Acts xv. But there is no small difficulty in patching up any semblance of identity between the statements of St. Paul and St. Luke. Indeed it is so great, that the discriminating

\* Gal. ii. 1.



mind of Paley seems to abandon it as hopeless; though still entangled in the meshes of original prejudice, he finds his only refuge in the supposition of some visit not included in St. Luke's narrative.

St. Paul in his Epistle speaks of communicating his doctrine "privately to them which were of reputation\*;" St. Luke in the Acts describes a public assembly of the Church, in which all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Paul and Barnabas†; which two accounts appear wholly irreconcilable, though it would be obviously natural for St. Paul to have taken the opportunity of private communication on doctrinal points, when on his visit with alms. Again St. Paul in his Epistle says that he went up by revelation, which seems no very intelligible account of his mission by the Church of Antioch; though on the other hand his mission with the alms originated in the revelation made through Agabus of the approaching famine‡. Once more, St. Paul in his Epistle lays some stress on his not allowing Titus to be circumcised §; but what possibility could there be of such a measure being even suggested at the time of the council, in which the liberty of the Gentiles in this respect was so triumphantly vindicated, and so formally admitted. The Judaizing spirit complained of however could not have been new at

\* Gal. ii. 2.

† Acts xv. 12.

‡ Acts xi. 28.

§ Gal. ii. 3.



the time of the council, and might probably enough have been found by St. Paul in full force at Jerusalem, when he came there with the alms perhaps two or three years before; and he might ere long have had the occasion, which he relates, to reprove St. Peter for that instance of dissimulation, which seems, one would imagine, far less likely to have occurred after the formal decrees of the council than before\*.

I make these few but, I think, very natural remarks in order to shake the confidence of those who have learnt to identify the visit after 14 years with the mission to the council at Jerusalem, and to prepare them to admit more readily what I cannot regard as less than the demonstrative certainty of its identity with the visit with alms in the year A. D. 44; which concurrently establishes the main point at issue, the true date of the crucifixion, throwing it back beyond further question on the year A. D. 30. It will be seen too that several connected questions thus receive their final and obvious answer. For it is found that St. Paul must have reckoned the years from his conversion, and not from his visit 3 years later; that his conversion must have taken place in the same year as the crucifixion; and that (as was reserved above for final proof) the death of Herod Agrippa could by no possibility have happened in A. D. 43 instead of A. D.

\* Gal. ii. 11.



44 without reducing the 14 years' interval now fully established.

The two Cardinal Dates of A. D. 30 for the crucifixion and A. D. 44 for the death of Herod being thus I trust finally settled, we have a frame-work of 14 years, within which to arrange the events of half or nearly half the period which the History of the Acts embraces; and we have the further advantage of fixed dates from which to reckon the remainder, viz. from St. Paul's visit to Jerusalem with the alms to his liberation from his two years' imprisonment at Rome. The first period may be subdivided for convenience into portions of 3 years before and 11 years after St. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, and it will be found that the latter period falls naturally into subdivisions very similar to these. For it will appear on a careful examination of the narrative from St. Paul's arrival at Corinth to its close, that it records the events of 11 years, with regard to which the only difficulty is to assign them as a whole their correct place in the scheme of Chronology. And on this determination will depend the number of years to be assigned to the preceding and shorter subdivision, extending from St. Paul's second visit to his arrival at Corinth, since the two Apostolical journeys, and the sojournings at Antioch which it includes, are narrated in such terms as of themselves to leave the time which they occupied exceedingly uncertain; so much so indeed, that



while Townsend, for example, considers St. Paul's first journey to have occupied four years, and his second little more than one, Capellus on the other hand assigns little more than one year to the first journey, and more than four to the second. It is of course plain enough that chronologers have been tempted to these extreme calculations by the requirements of their several theories respecting St. Paul's visit after 14 years, the date of the Council of Jerusalem, &c. &c. And I think it must be equally obvious, that the most promising way of reducing these conflicting opinions if not to absolute certainty and truth, yet at least to some reasonable and satisfactory approach to it, must be to consider the latter subdivision first, and thus to fix the close of this brief interval as accurately as may be found practicable (the commencement of it in the year A. D. 44 being already assumed as certain), and then to arrange the events narrated as fairly as may be within the given limits. But this remains to be attempted in its proper order.

1. I return then to the first subdivision of the History of the Acts of the Apostles, embracing about 3 years from the crucifixion or more strictly from the ascension of our Lord A. D. 30 to St. Paul's first visit after his conversion, viz. in A. D. 33. We have the advantage, be it remembered, of these already ascertained limits for arranging the intermediate transactions; but it is at all events satisfactory to observe that the



arrangement to which we are thus led is at least simple and natural. I do not think indeed that any unprejudiced person, more especially any person unbiassed by some special theory relating to the time of St. Paul's conversion, could read the first eight or nine chapters of the Acts, and suppose that many months elapsed before the death of St. Stephen, or many weeks afterwards before the conversion of St. Paul. Four months seem quite sufficient for the transactions of the infant church from the day of Pentecost to the death of St. Stephen. And I am much inclined to the opinion of those, who consider that what is said of the synagogue of the Libertines and Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, implies the presence of foreign Jews assembled at one of the great festivals; in which case it could have been no other than the feast of Tabernacles, at which the first martyr suffered. So instantaneous was the persecution which ensued, and so immediate was the dispersion of the church at Jerusalem, that it is even mentioned before the burial of St. Stephen. St. Paul's violence in it is next described; and the preaching of the scattered disciples, the conversion of the Samaritans, and some transactions relating to them and to Philip, which probably took place during the ensuing year or even later, having been given parenthetically, the narrative returns at once to St. Paul's violent zeal, and his commission from the high priest to the Syna-



gogues of Damascus, which, if we may judge from the rapid effects of his exertions at Jerusalem, must have very soon followed. We may therefore, I think, without hesitation place his conversion in the autumn of A. D. 30, and this allows us, according to the ordinary use of the phrase after 3 years (*μετ' ἑτῆς τρία*), to suppose that St. Paul, after passing the intermediate time partly in Arabia and partly in preaching the Gospel at Damascus, came to Jerusalem to see Peter in the spring or early summer of A. D. 33.

The preferableness of that interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel, which places the crucifixion in the middle of the closing week, has been before adverted to, and may now receive an ample illustration from closely considering this portion of the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles. Down to this period we have no instance of the Gospel being offered to any except those who were in some sort within the Covenant; for the Samaritans were believers in the Mosaic Revelation, and occupied an important and central portion of the promised land; and the Ethiopian Eunuch was evidently a proselyte to Judaism. But the symptoms of an approaching change began now to manifest themselves. St. Paul during this short visit to Jerusalem, while praying in the temple, was in a trance, and saw the Lord, who not only commanded him to hasten from Jerusalem, but added the important declaration, "I will send thee far hence to the



“Gentiles.” His immediate removal to Tarsus followed, and he must thus by the approaching autumn, the precise close of the seventieth week, have been in a favourable position for opening the glad tidings of Salvation to the Gentiles of Syria and Cilicia.

This year was also that season of rest to the churches of Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, during which St. Peter made his circuit through them, and then, instead of returning to Jerusalem, sojourned for some time (*ἡμέρας ἱκάνας*) in Joppa, from whence he was ere long summoned to effect the conversion of Cornelius and his family, the first fruit of the Gentile World. There is something which naturally strikes one as beautifully appropriate to the closing months of the closing year of Daniel’s 70th week, the one week in which the covenant was to be confirmed unto many, in these words of St. Luke: “Then had the churches  
“rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Sa-  
“maria, and were edified; and walking in the  
“fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy  
“Ghost, were multiplied\*.” The three recognised divisions of the Holy Land are thus distinctly and emphatically enumerated; churches had now been planted throughout them; their converts were multiplied; they were in the full enjoyment of spiritual comfort and external peace; the covenant was confirmed; the prophetic promise fulfilled.

\* Acts ix. 31.



And now, before proceeding with the remainder of the Chronology of the Acts of the Apostles, let us advert to the points of time recently ascertained, and, I trust, demonstratively fixed, and observe more distinctly their important bearing on the scheme of Sacred Chronology. Nothing could possibly be more independent on the date of any command of the kings of Persia to restore or build Jerusalem than the historical evidences through which we were enabled to demonstrate the dates of our Saviour's birth and baptism: it was therefore doubly satisfactory to perceive, that A. D. 26, the ascertained year of his baptism, was neither more nor less than 69 weeks of years or 483 years from the year of Ezra's commission B. C. 458, the 7th year of Artaxerxes' reign. For this point being once clearly established, there remained no room for hesitation between the 7th and the 20th of Artaxerxes for the ἀρχή of the 70 weeks, though the latter, being the date of the commission to Nehemiah, has been preferred by (among others) the compilers of the Chronological Index commonly bound up with our Bibles. But even after this date was settled and admitted, yet so long as it was disputed whether our Saviour's ministry embraced four passovers, or three, or only two; whether his actual ministry succeeded soon or several years after his baptism; and whether his crucifixion occurred in A. D. 29 or A. D. 33 or one of the intermediate years; (and these are points, be it observed, on



which Chronologers are still at issue); so long would they be led to all sorts of guesses as to the closing week and closing event of the prophecy, or, if they found the termination of the 70 weeks according to their reckoning unmarked by any suitable event, might even be led, like Greswell, to count the half week twice over in order to attain their object, or by a similar experiment with the 7 weeks carry on with him the chronological scope of the prophecy to the termination of the wars and desolations five years after the destruction of Jerusalem. But now the clearly ascertained four passovers of our Saviour's ministry on the one hand, being met on the other by the demonstrative application of St. Paul's visit after 3 years to A. D. 33, confine the crucifixion beyond removal, or the chance of it, to A. D. 30, and to the middle of the 70th week; and securely associate the closing year A. D. 33 with those events and transactions which can scarcely fail to appear the most appropriate and characteristic. On my own mind indeed their striking adaptation to the close of the confirmed covenant had made a strong impression long before I could satisfactorily connect them with the year A. D. 33; some years indeed before I was happily led to the consideration of those notes of time in the Epistle to the Galatians, which, as I confidently believe, establish the point beyond dispute or cavil.

Moreover let it be now carefully noted, that



the doubts just adverted to with regard to the actual commencement of our Saviour's ministry may be at once and for ever discarded. For the already ascertained ministry of at least 3 years and 4 passovers, terminated by the crucifixion in A. D. 30, must infallibly have included the pass-over of A. D. 27, the one succeeding the Baptism in A. D. 26, thus leaving no indefinite interval of retirement whatever, and safely identifying the first year of our Lord's ministry with A. D. 27.

There is besides another Chronological prophecy, on which the strongest light is thrown by one of the dates here established, viz. the figurative prophecy of the siege or sieges of Jerusalem, which represents Ezekiel as lying 390 days (for years) on his left side to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel, and 40 on his right side to bear that of the house of Judah. The first series is generally, and I apprehend on just grounds, considered to date from the schismatic rebellion of Jeroboam, and to terminate in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The usual explanation of the other (I will not say relied on, but adopted for want of a better) is to date it from the commencement of Jeremiah's prophetic mission in the 13th year of Josiah\*. But it appears far from satisfactory, for the neglect of the warnings of Jeremiah are too little marked among the more heinous offences of Judah; indeed the abominations of Manasseh

\* Jer. xxv. 1. &c.



and the idolatries introduced by him are more than once distinctly referred to as the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem\*, not to mention that the 13th year of Josiah was exactly 41 years before that event, so that we miss that strict accuracy which we naturally expect in inspired prophecy. But what, it may now be asked, deserves to be considered preeminently the iniquity of Judah as distinct from Israel, if not that awful crime which was perpetrated at the Passover of the now ascertained year A. D. 30, preceding, as it does, critically and exactly by 40 years the fatal Passover of A. D. 70, at which the assembled nation was hemmed in for destruction by the armies of Titus? Nothing, I conceive, but the doubts so universally prevalent with regard to the year of the Crucifixion, could possibly have prevented the general admission of the fulfilment of this prophecy at once so striking and so obvious.

II. Of the events of the next 11 years, with one marked exception, the Acts of the Apostles supply us with the most scanty notice. Still it is clear that between the first visit of St. Paul after his conversion and his second visit with the contributions for the church in the year A. D. 44 eleven years had elapsed, and we have only to account for the time in the best way which our defective materials will allow. We have, I think, no means of fixing with certainty the date of the

\* Jer. xv. 4. and 2 Kings xxi. 11.



conversion of Cornelius ; but there are several grounds for inferring that it took place very much earlier than is generally supposed. The year A. D. 41, assigned to it by the Bible Chronology with Ussher and others, seems utterly unaccountable, even after deferring St. Paul's removal to Tarsus to the year A. D. 37. St. Peter in the council at Jerusalem respecting the circumcision of Gentile converts speaks of it as having occurred "a good while ago" (*ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων*)\*, and the narrative of the Acts, after relating the particulars of it and St. Peter's satisfactory explanation of his conduct in it, reverts once more to the dispersion of the believers on the persecution after the death of St. Stephen, and its consequences †, thus giving the intermediate history a parenthetical form, which it would scarcely have done, had it occupied many years, or been unconnected by close succession. Again, the "many days" (*ἡμέρας ἱκανάς*), that St. Peter tarried at Joppa, seem much more probably interpreted of months than years, when we consider him as generally resident at Jerusalem. And lastly, when the more enlarged dispensation of the Gospel to the Gentiles superseded the restricted commission to the chosen people, it cannot but appear natural to look for the early occurrence of such events, as mark its enlarged character. Accordingly, without assuming an exact proof, where none has

\* Acts xv. 7.

† Ibid. xi. 19.



been attained, I have little hesitation in assigning the Conversion of Cornelius to the year A.D. 34.

For some years to come we have no distinct succession of events recorded. We may however presume, that, while the scattered disciples travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch preaching the word to none but unto Jews only\*, St. Paul was preaching to both Jews and Gentiles in Cilicia, and founding those churches, which he afterwards confirmed on his second Apostolical journey†. It was perhaps about the year A.D. 39 or A.D. 40, that, while yet probably at Tarsus, he was favoured with the vision, to which he refers in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, as having happened to him about 14 years ago‡. Not long perhaps after this the increased success of the Gospel at Antioch induced the Church at Jerusalem to send Barnabas thither§. It was apparently about A.D. 42, that he brought Paul from Tarsus; about A.D. 43, that the disciples were first called Christians; and certainly in A.D. 44, that Paul and Barnabas in consequence of the famine predicted by Agabus were commissioned to bear relief to the brethren in Judæa.

III. For the reasons already given I proceed to consider the last 11 years of the History of the Acts before the few years preceding their commencement. My first point, one, I think, easily proved, will be to shew that from St. Paul's first

\* Acts xi. 19.

† Ibid. xv. 41.

2 Cor. xii. 2.

§ Acts xi. 22.



arrival at Corinth to his release from imprisonment at Rome 11 years elapsed, wanting probably three or four months, but still, speaking roundly, and sufficiently for the purpose of Chronological arrangement, eleven years ; my second point, on which it is far more difficult to pronounce with confidence, will be to assign these 11 years as satisfactorily as may be to their true place in the scheme of Chronology.

These years will, I think, be more clearly shewn to be eleven, if I assume a year for St. Paul's arrival at Corinth without insisting on its correctness, and then assign the events narrated in succession to their proper place in the series.

A. D. 48. St. Paul arrives at Corinth ; it must have been rather late in the summer, for he stayed a year and six months\*, and left, as it will be seen, quite early in the year.

A. D. 49. At Corinth. The disturbance under Gallio must have taken place before the close of this year, for it did not cause his removal, but he still remained a good while (*ἡμέρας ἱκανάς*).

A. D. 50. St. Paul sails from Corinth early in the year ; lands at Ephesus ; but hastens away to keep the coming feast (probably the Passover) at Jerusalem, promising however to return to Ephesus ; merely saluting the church at Jerusalem, but making rather a longer stay at Antioch, he proceeds on a circuit through Galatia and Phrygia, coming round to Ephesus before the

\* Acts xviii. 11.



winter ; preaches in the synagogue *three* months, viz. the winter season (as three months seem here and elsewhere to imply).

A. D. 51. After the three months, St. Paul begins to dispute in the school of Tyrannus.

A. D. 52. Still engaged in the school of Tyrannus.

A. D. 53. Two years being completed in the school of Tyrannus, he sends forward Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, purposing to stay at Ephesus till the Pentecost\* ; and he did stay for a season †, though perhaps not quite so long as he intended, owing to the uproar in the Theatre raised by Demetrius the silversmith. This stay, little if at all exceeding two years and a half, St. Paul in his after-exhortation to the Ephesian elders ‡ adverts to as of three years' duration, but this is obviously in accordance with the ordinary use of round numbers in an address of the kind. The remainder of the summer and autumn he passes in Macedonia and its neighbourhood, and then stays 3 months in Greece (no doubt again the winter months), as he had given the Corinthians reason to expect §.

A. D. 54. At the close of the winter he prosecutes his intention of proceeding with contributions to Jerusalem ; but as the Jews lie in wait for him, he declines the direct voyage to Syria, and passing through Macedonia does not leave Philippi

\* 1 Cor. xvi. 8.

† Acts xix. 22.

‡ Ibid. xx. 31.

§ 1 Cor. xvi. 6.



till after the Passover, but makes every effort to reach Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost. Soon after his arrival he is rescued from the Jews, and sent to Cæsarea, where Felix detains him a prisoner.

A.D.55. St. Paul remains a prisoner at Cæsarea.

A. D. 56. Festus succeeds Felix after St. Paul had remained in prison two years. St. Paul appeals to Cæsar; and is shipwrecked on his voyage to Italy; winters at Melita (the three months as before).

A. D. 57. Proceeds to Rome, which he reaches in the spring, and is placed in the charge of a soldier, but in his own hired house.

A. D. 58. Still preaching the Gospel in the same custody.

A. D. 59. Remains a prisoner to the full end of two years, and is released probably in the spring or early summer. End of the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles.

A comparison of this sketch with the course of St. Luke's narrative will, I think, be sufficient to satisfy any careful reader, that the transactions which I have thus arranged were those of nearly eleven years, and so plainly linked together in the order of succession, that if by means of contemporary history the exact date of any one of these can be ascertained, the rest, necessarily advancing or receding all together, will at once find their fixed places in the scale of Chronology. The



difficulty however of establishing such a date is much greater than might naturally be imagined.

The first occurrence which appears to hold out a promise of this kind, is that of St. Paul on his arrival at Corinth finding Aquila and Priscilla "lately come from Italy, because that Claudius "had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome." But the date of this decree seems nowhere recorded, and I have met with no satisfactory attempt at inferring it. Suetonius indeed confirms the fact thus: "*Judæos impulsore Christo assidue "tumultuantes Roma expulit*"\*, classing it with some other transactions belonging for the most part to the later rather than the earlier years of the reign of Claudius, and leading us by his expressions to suppose that the tumults might probably have arisen from the disputes between the unbelieving Jews and the converts to Christianity. This last consideration makes it the less reasonable to infer the date of the decree, as some have done, by connecting it, either in the way of cause or consequence, with the disturbances which occurred in Jerusalem under the government of Cumanus and in the 9th year of Claudius, (A. D. 49) and which were excited by a sudden and unlooked-for provocation †. Another attempt, and perhaps one of the most plausible, at fixing a decided date to a passage of the Acts is one adopted by Lardner, from what he calls a happy thought of Lightfoot, who argues that St. Paul's

\* Suet. Claud. xxv.

† Josephus Antiq. XX. vi. 1.



purpose of going to Rome, which he expresses when on the point of leaving Ephesus for Macedonia and Achaia\*, implies the death of Claudius and the extinction of his decree. Claudius died Oct. 13. A. D. 54; and the news of Nero's accession might have reached Ephesus in time for St. Paul to have adopted his plan in the early part of A. D. 55. Moreover this was no anticipation by St. Paul of a liberty to which he saw some reason to look forward; but it was already in existence, for though he himself intended to visit Macedonia, Achaia, and Jerusalem previously, it appears that Aquila and Priscilla took immediate advantage of the restored privilege, and returned to Rome the year that St. Paul left Ephesus. But after all, what certainty have we that Claudius maintained the rigorous exclusion of Jews from Rome to the close of his life? There might be various causes for ceasing to enforce his decree long before that event. And I think we shall find grounds for supposing that he did so; for if we defer the time of St. Paul's leaving Ephesus to A. D. 55, we shall find by reference to the preceding chronological series, that we are compelled to defer also the recal of Felix from his government to the year A. D. 58, the 4th of Nero, against which there lies an historical objection of considerable weight. Josephus informs us that when Felix was superseded by Festus in his government, some of the leading

\* Acts xix. 21. 22.



Jews of Cæsarea went to Rome to prefer heavy charges against him for his violence and injustice, and that he would certainly have been punished but for the entreaties of his brother Pallas, whom Nero at that time held in the highest honour (μάλιστα δὲ τότε διὰ τιμῆς ἔχων ἐκεῖνον)\*. On the other hand we learn from Tacitus, that this height of honour did not attend Pallas longer than about the first year of Nero's reign (A.D. 55.) With Claudius he had been preeminently a favourite minister; but Nero ere long conceived a disgust at his arrogance†, and in about a year actually deprived him of his office (demovit curâ rerum) as being the chief supporter of his mother Agrippina in her proud bearing towards himself‡. Their influence, though it declined together, does not seem to have fallen, or at least the show of it, at once and entirely. Agrippina, accused of treasonable practices, cleared herself so triumphantly, that she obtained of Nero vengeance on her accusers, and provinces and offices for her friends§, and Pallas under similar charges carried his cause with so high a hand, that his accuser was sentenced to banishment||. These were the transactions of the end of A. D. 55 and the beginning of A. D. 56, and as Nero had not yet thrown off all regard for appearances, he was as likely at this time to have attended to a request of Pallas regarding his brother Felix, as to have bestowed

\* Jos. Antiq. XX. viii. 9.

† Tacit. XIII. 2.

‡ Ibid 14.

§ Ibid. 22.

|| Ibid. 23.



honours and emolument on Agrippina's friends, though he was really beginning to hate them both, and in about 3 years compassed her death\*, as also eventually that of Pallas†. If Josephus must be taken quite literally, the recal of Felix was in A. D. 55. But considerable difficulties attend the supposition; Nero, when at the beginning of his reign, or rather, we may suppose, in the ensuing spring, the season for such arrangements in the provinces, (for his accession was on Oct. 13. A. D. 54,) he made some slight additions to Agrippa's government, continued Felix in the government of Judæa, &c. nearly as before‡, so that the complaints against him which led to his recal were evidently unknown at Rome. It should seem also that the first intimation to Nero of the misconduct of Felix, which caused his recal, must have arisen from Felix himself sending as he did the heads of the contending factions at Cæsarea to plead their own cause before him at Rome‡. They could not well have arrived before the summer of A.D. 55. The violence and cruelty of Felix would no doubt quickly appear from their joint statements, but allowing for the least probable delay in giving them a hearing, in resolving to recal Felix, in fixing on his successor, and in sending out Festus, how could he have been in Judæa so as to leave time for the transactions recorded in the Acts? Besides, Pallas at all events was in full official influence in A. D.

\* Tacit XIV. 8.

† Ibid. 65.

‡ Joseph. Bell. II. xiii. 7.



55, and would have been a powerful obstacle to all undue haste in the decision against his brother. It is probable therefore that at this time, though he could not gainsay the obvious propriety of his brother's recal, his influence would at least anticipate the danger of any further penalty, so that when on the actual return of Felix the following season, fresh accusers came as related, Nero would naturally consider them as only informing him of what he already knew, and the case as long since decided on. This perhaps is the best way of accounting for the influence of Pallas saving Felix from punishment, without attributing too much to the remnant of it, which might or might not have availed after his loss of office. Thus far then, while the authority of Josephus compels us to place the recal of Felix very early in the reign of Nero, the balance of probability should seem to favour the conclusion, that the actual accomplishment of this change of governors took place in Nero's second year A. D. 56, rather than in the year preceding. It should be observed however that those, whose system of chronology compels them to place the recal of Felix too late in the reign of Nero for any remaining influence of Pallas to have screened his brother from punishment, or even to set the testimony of Josephus on the point completely at nought, may, and indeed do, refer to Josephus himself for a series of transactions belonging to the administration of Felix all related after the



accession of Nero, and, if we suppose them all to belong to his reign, occupying too much time to be consistent with the early recal of Felix, which has been suggested. Now one of these transactions, and not the first mentioned, is the repulse of the Egyptian impostor and his followers. And if we place his appearance even as early as the first year of Nero, St. Paul, whom the Chief Captain Lysias was disposed to identify with this Egyptian, may be supposed to have visited Jerusalem at the Pentecost of the year following; and he had certainly been two years at Cæsarea, when Festus superseded Felix, who must then have been recalled in the 4th year of Nero at the very earliest. Unfortunately Josephus gives no dates at this part of his narrative, and has besides embarrassed the arrangement of it in a way which can scarcely fail to mislead his readers on a cursory perusal. In order to understand this observation it is necessary to revert in the first place to an event or two, which he has distinctly dated, and then arrange the succeeding and undated transactions as carefully and consistently as we are able. Now he clearly marks the 8th of Claudius A. D. 48 as the year of the appointment of Cumanus to the government of Judæa, as also that of the death of Herod of Chalcis, and of his being succeeded there by his nephew Agrippa (the king Agrippa of St. Luke); and the 12th of Claudius A. D. 52, is named as the year of the banishment of Cumanus for the unjust



part he had taken in the disputes between the Jews and Samaritans, and of the appointment of Felix in his stead, as the year moreover of the advancement of Agrippa to a more enlarged dominion over the Tetrarchies of Philip and Ly-sanias, &c. This date is further confirmed by Josephus having remarked in addition, that Agrippa had ruled in Chalcis four years; and by Tacitus also, who places the trial and condemnation of Cumanus in the Consulship of Faustus Sylla and Salvius Otho, viz. A. U. 805. A. D. 52.

It has also some bearing on the question before us to notice that it appears from Tacitus, that this was not the first introduction of Felix to authority in the province; but that, on the contrary, he had been in authority there for a considerable time (*jam pridem impositus* \*), and that he had been equally guilty with Cumanus in those transactions for which the latter only was punished. Whether his earlier authority was territorial (as Tacitus supposes, who assigns him Samaria), or rather military (as may be collected from Suetonius†, when he says, “*cohortibus et alis provinciæque Judææ præpositus*”), may perhaps be doubted. The latter I should consider the more probable, as Josephus, who is very minute in stating the subdivisions of territorial sovereignty, mentions him for the first time as the successor of Cumanus. Be this how-

\* Tacit. Annal. XII. 54.

† Suet. XXVIII. Claud.



ever as it may, there is no difficulty in supposing him to have possessed official authority in the province during the greater part or perhaps the whole of the administration of Cumanus, viz., from A. D. 48. And this will sufficiently account for St. Paul addressing him as one who had been “of many years a judge unto this nation\*,” without the necessity of carrying the date of his last visit to Jerusalem into the reign of Nero at all. Having premised thus much, and established A. D. 52 as the year in which Felix succeeded Cumanus as governor of Judæa, I come to the consideration of that peculiar arrangement of Josephus, which I have referred to as calculated to mislead his readers at this period of his history. After mentioning the appointment of Felix, he omits for the present the troubles of Judæa, and deviates into Roman History for a brief view of the close of the reign of Claudius and the accession of Nero, and returns to his proper subject by stating the arrangements adopted by Nero for the province of Judæa, viz., the continuation of Felix in his full government, with the exception of the small district of Galilee transferred to the dominion of Agrippa; and now follows the detail of the troubles which were falling on Judæa in rapid succession, and the conduct of Felix under them. A hasty perusal, indeed an attentive one, unless arrested by some suspicion of inconsistency, would, I conceive,

\* Acts xxiv. 10.



inevitably assign these transactions to the reign of Nero. But my reader is now, I trust, prepared to perceive with me, that since two years and more elapsed between the appointment of Felix and the death of Claudius in Oct. A. D. 54, and since Nero's new arrangements, despatched as usual from Rome in the following spring, could not have been known and acted on in Judæa till the summer of A. D. 55, the transactions in question really belong for the most part to these three years ; and how easily and consistently they may find their place within them, will be at once seen by a reference to the particulars. The earliest efforts of Felix were directed vigorously and with considerable success against the numerous robbers which infested the country, and next arose the insidious pest of the Sicarii, a confederacy of murderers, who armed with secret daggers mixed themselves with the crowds especially of the great festivals, and singled out their victims with impunity, one of the first of whom was the High Priest Jonathan, and this by the connivance of Felix himself, who was deeply offended by the freedom with which he had ventured to reprove him for the faults of his government. While this terror afflicted the city within, impostors without were deluding the credulous vulgar to follow them into the wilderness, pretending divine authority for assuring them of the immediate restoration of their liberties ; and among these the most influential and



dangerous was the Egyptian false prophet, whose followers must have been routed by Felix not long before St. Paul was mistaken for him by Lysias. But if we place St. Paul's arrival at Jerusalem, as before proposed, at the Pentecost of A. D. 54 (the 14th and last of Claudius), the preceding two years or nearly so appear to give ample time for the events just recited without bringing the attempt of the Egyptian into any inconsistent proximity to the arrest of St. Paul. The remaining events of the administration of Felix are merely renewed attempts of the robbers and impostors to excite the people, which may well belong to the year A. D. 54, and the feud which broke out between the Jews and Syrians at Cæsarea, which might have commenced about the same time, and which induced Felix, after his violent and unsuccessful attempts to pacify them, to send the heads of the contending factions to plead their cause at Rome; and this event I have before assigned to A. D. 55, the first of Nero, when the credit of Pallas was still at its height, and might readily have saved his brother from any punishment in addition to that recall from his government, which had become obviously expedient. There is, therefore, I confidently maintain no necessity whatever for resorting to the palpable inconsistency of disputing the accuracy of the account given by Josephus of the removal of Felix, a matter which, as a contemporary (being about that time 20 years of



age), he must have been perfectly acquainted with.

But on the other hand, reverting once more to what I have already urged as to the difficulty of supposing, with the late Dr. Burton and others, that the recal of Felix (even to the transfer of his office to the hands of Festus at Cæsarea inclusive) all took place in A. D. 55, the 1st of Nero, we shall find the argument still further confirmed by the light which the dates just now ascertained throw on one or two particulars closely connected with the history of Felix. When he sat in judgment on St. Paul at Cæsarea, he was accompanied by his wife Drusilla. And her story is as follows: she was the youngest sister of Herod Agrippa, who, on being elevated from the minor sovereignty of Chalcis to a considerable dominion, as before related, was induced to look around for suitable alliances for his two unmarried sisters, and married Drusilla to Azizus the petty king of Emesa. From him however she was ere long separated; for Felix became enamoured of her, and by the agency of an emissary of his own, seconded by the importunities of her sister, induced her to desert her husband and become his wife. Now Agrippa was at Rome during the trial of Cumanus in the summer of A. D. 52; and allowing any probable time for his return to Judæa, and taking possession of his new dominions, for arranging the preliminaries of his sister's marriage, and for her union with her husband, however brief, what



are we to think of her appearing in public as the recognised wife of Felix at the ensuing Pentecost A. D. 53, as she must have done, if St. Paul's two years' imprisonment terminated in A. D. 55? Again, supposing the attempt of the Egyptian false prophet to have preceded the arrest of St. Paul the shortest possible time which can be consistent with the expressions of St. Luke; or allowing for the succession of impostors, who seem for the most part to have preceded the Egyptian, and for those conflicts with robbers, with which the administration of Felix commenced; who would venture to find a place for these transactions between the autumn of A. D. 52 and the Pentecost of A. D. 53? The improbabilities in both these cases appear indeed closely bordering on the impossible, but in both of them alike the addition of one year, as suggested, makes all easy and consistent.

The ignorance of St. Paul as to the High Priesthood of Ananias\* ought perhaps to be here referred to, as many have considered it to throw light on the date of the transaction; and Michaelis in particular, whose scheme of time assumes St. Paul's necessary acquaintance with the person of Ananias, has accounted for St. Paul's expressions with great ingenuity, though still, I apprehend, inconsistently with the actual facts of the case. He supposes indeed, that Ananias, when sent to Rome on the occasion of the dis-

\* Acts xxiii. 1-5.



pute between the Jews and Samaritans, had been deposed from the High Priesthood, and succeeded by Jonathan; and afterwards on the death of the latter undertook of his own authority the discharge of that office, and that St. Paul, who had been only a few days in Jerusalem, might be ignorant of this resumption of office\*. But Josephus says nothing of his having been thus deposed; on the contrary, as he belonged to the acquitted and triumphant party, there is no reasonable ground for the surmise. His speaking of Jonathan as High Priest afterwards proves nothing of the kind, as he had been already mentioned by that title, when he was described as strongly remonstrating with Cumanus on the injustice of his proceedings before Quadratus sent the disputants to Rome at all; and when he was sent to Rome with Ananias, they are together called the High Priests Jonathan and Ananias. Neither does this precedence of Jonathan's name prove him to have been the actual High Priest, any more than Ananias is proved to be so† by his name standing before that of Caiaphas, who certainly was the actual holder of the office. These cases indeed appear precisely parallel, viz. those of persons who had formerly held the High Priesthood, and been superseded (as had become extremely common under the Romans), yet retaining the title, and being associated as

\* Michaelis Introd. to New Test. vol. i. part. i. ch. ii. sect. 11. Marsh's translation, Edit. 1802.

† Luke iii. 2.



an assistant and frequently as a deputy of the High Priest in various functions of importance. The truth of the matter is indeed very satisfactorily to be traced in Josephus. According to him Jonathan the son of Ananus (the very Ananus just referred to) was made High Priest A. D. 35, in the room of Caiaphas, by Vitellius\* ; his brother Theophilus by the order of Vitellius supersedes him in A. D. 37† ; Simon, surnamed Canthera, supersedes Theophilus by the order of Herod Agrippa A. D. 41‡. In A. D. 42 Herod Agrippa is desirous of reappointing Jonathan, who however with a modesty, which Josephus commends, declines the honour in favour of his brother Matthias§ ; Matthias again is superseded by Elioneus A. D. 43 or 44|| ; and in A. D. 45 Joseph is appointed by Herod of Chalcis¶ ; and in A. D. 47 Ananias supersedes Joseph by order of the same sovereign\*\*. Now from this time there appears no new appointment for 7 or 8 years, till that of Ismail by Agrippa Junior at the time of the troubles at Cæsarea about A. D. 54 or 55, so that there was nothing remarkable in St. Paul being brought before him at any time during this interval, or in notice thence arising, that it was after the murder of Jonathan, who had been nothing more than titular High Priest since A. D. 37, though it was clearly after that

\* Joseph. Antiq. XVIII. iv. 3.

† Ibid. v. 3.

‡ Ibid. XIX. vi. 2.

§ Ibid. vi. 4.

|| Ibid. viii. 1.

¶ Ibid. XX. i. 3.

\*\* Ibid. v. 2.



transaction, which preceded the attempt of the Egyptian false prophet, as this last did the arrival of St. Paul. It is quite sufficient therefore to attribute St. Paul's expressions simply to his being unacquainted with the person of Ananias, which was a very probable case, as he had made no stay in Jerusalem since the Council, which will presently appear to have preceded the appointment of Ananias in A. D. 47, for though he had visited Jerusalem in A. D. 50, he merely saluted the Church and passed on to Antioch. Michaelis however having adopted a scheme of Chronology, which makes the Council at Jerusalem later than the elevation of Ananias to the High Priesthood, seems to have been thus driven to tax his ingenuity to account for St. Paul's ignorance of his office; whereas those who have no difficulty of the kind to surmount may well be satisfied with the more obvious and simple interpretation of St. Paul's expressions, which though they furnish no proof of the exact dates of St. Paul's visit or of the recal of Felix, at least harmonize completely with the earlier dates which I have assigned to these transactions, whereas on the other hand they cast a stumbling-block in the way of those who adopt the later dates, which the ingenuity of Michaelis has in vain attempted to surmount.

After considering the question in these various points of view, and observing on the one side the palpable inconsistency of overlooking the express



testimony of Josephus as to the early recal of Felix, and the absence of all excuse for doing so, and on the other, the difficulties which beset such a strict interpretation of his expression as would limit it absolutely to the first of Nero, I think we may fairly and reasonably acquiesce in the highly probable conclusion, that the second of Nero A. D. 56 was the actual year of the recal of Felix and of St. Paul's voyage and shipwreck, and that by consequence he arrived at Rome in the spring of A. D. 57, and was released from his two years' confinement there in A. D. 59. This of course leaves the chronology of the last eleven years of the Acts of the Apostles finally standing in accordance with the dates which were for argument's sake assumed for them at the commencement of the section.

IV. We now come to the remaining subdivision of the last half of the Acts, which, though first in order of time, is placed last in the discussion for reasons already stated; and we have now obtained the advantage which was anticipated by the delay, that of having certain fixed limits within which we may more confidently arrange a series of transactions so little defined by St. Luke in point of date and duration, as to have led to the widest differences of conjecture regarding the time which they really occupied. These limits then are A. D. 44, the year of Herod Agrippa's death, and St. Paul's visit with the alms, and A. D. 48 the year of his first arrival at



Corinth. The return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch from their mission to Jerusalem appears to have been ere long succeeded by the first Apostolical circuit. As the spring would probably be selected for its commencement, I am disposed to place it in the following year, viz. A. D. 45, and though its undefined duration has led some in subservience to their preconceived systems to extend it to three and even four years, I see nothing either in the distance of the countries visited, or in the detail of proceedings, to interfere with the natural supposition that the Apostles returned to Antioch before the winter. Here however “they abode long time” (*χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον*), an indefinite expression, which might have left us wavering hopelessly between the notion of a few months and that of the six years which our Bible Chronology has adopted, had we not fortunately secured beforehand a framework, to the limits of which our sketch of time must be somehow or other adjusted. Some months however may be very well allowed to this “abode,” and during these months the intruders from Judæa may have raised the dissensions and disputes on the subject of circumcision, which were eventually referred to the Council of Apostles at Jerusalem. Happily, warned by our now well-understood limits, we may place this Council with fair probability in the latter half of the year A. D. 46; for without denying the possibility of its having taken place



in the spring of A. D. 47, I much prefer that season for the commencement of the second Apostolical circuit, especially as it embraced a much wider range than the preceding one. There are no signs however of their returning to winter at Antioch; and as Corinth was reached at no very advanced season of the year, an intervening winter must be allowed for, but whether passed before or after the crossing over to Macedon may perhaps be doubtful. There is at all events no remaining difficulty in supposing the progress of the events recorded to have brought St. Paul to Corinth at the end of the summer A. D. 48. I think it will be readily seen that whereas the series of transactions just arranged find their place naturally and easily and without undue and improbable constraint within the 4 years here assigned to them, the contraction of these limits even by one year would have rendered any satisfactory arrangement of them exceedingly difficult. And this undoubtedly affords an additional argument of no inconsiderable weight in support of the various reasons already given for supposing the second of Nero A. D. 56, rather than the first, to be the year of the actual removal of Felix and of St. Paul's voyage and shipwreck, and of thus placing his release from imprisonment at Rome and the end of the History of the Acts of the Apostles in A. D. 59.

It will no doubt have been well understood that I lay no claim to absolute demonstration for



the chronology of the latter half of the Acts, though hoping that it will be found reasonably satisfactory in comparison with the conflicting theories of the day. Its perfect accuracy however is unimportant to the great scheme of Sacred Chronology, which it is my object to establish, and in behalf of which I do finally lay claim to the unquestionable certainty of the cardinal dates of A. D. 44 for the second visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem after his conversion, and for the death of Herod Agrippa ; of A. D. 33 for his first visit ; of A. D. 30 for the crucifixion of our Blessed Redeemer ; and of A. D. 27 for the commencement of his active ministry.



## CHAPTER XII.

A TRIAL OF THE SABBATICAL YEARS, SAID TO BE ASCERTAINED BY CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.

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I. WE find in the book of Maccabees, that in the 150th\* year (Æv. Seleuc.) Antiochus Eupator attacks Judæa, and besieges Bethsura†. The Bethsurians surrender, because, “it being a year of “rest to the land”‡, they had no victuals, the garrison at Jerusalem suffering much from the same cause §.

Josephus exactly follows this account ||.

Now 150 Æv. Seleuc. is considered to be identical with B. C. 163, and if we divide 163 by 7, there is a remainder of 2.

II. We read in the book of Maccabees the following details.

There was *snow* about the time of Jonathan's death\*\*.

Simon succeeds Jonathan and subdues the heathen in the year 170 Æv. Seleuc. ††

Demetrius is taken captive, and Simon's testi-

\* 1 Macc. vi. 20. † Ibid. 31. ‡ Ibid. 49. § Ibid. 53.

|| Joseph. Antiq. XII. ix. 5. \*\* 1 Macc. xiii. 22. †† Ibid. 41.



mony is set up in the month Elul (August-September) of the year 172 *Æv. Seleuc.* \*

Antiochus son of Demetrius masters Tryphon, but quarrels with Simon, 174 *Æv. Seleuc.* †

Simon is treacherously slain by Ptolemy in the 11th month, (Sabat = January) of the year 177 *Æv. Seleuc.* ‡

Josephus confirms this chronology by saying, that Simon governed Judæa 8 years §, and that John Hyrcanus succeeds his father and besieges Ptolemy in the castle of Dagon. The siege lingers on (obviously in the year 178. *Æv. Seleuc.*), till the Sabbatical year commences ||, which if reckoned from seed-time, would coincide chiefly with the year 179 or B.C. 134; but if the observing of rest commenced only with the sacred year of the Jews, then the siege lingered merely through February and March to Nisan 178 or B.C. 135. This latter supposition seems to be established by the relation that, after all this, Antiochus comes to besiege Jerusalem in his own 4th year and the 1st of John Hyrcanus \*\*, the siege lasting to the feast of Tabernacles.

Now 135 divided by 7 gives remainder 2.

III. We find in Josephus, that Herod was made king by the Roman Senate, C. Domitius Calvinus II. and C. Asinius Pollio being Consuls ††, B.C. 40. He returns, and after several difficulties attacks

\* 1 Macc. xiv. 3, 27.

† Ibid. xv.

‡ Ibid. xvi. 14.

§ Joseph. Antiq. XIII. vii. 4.

|| Ibid. viii. 1. and Bell. I. ii. 4.

\*\* Ibid. viii. 2.

†† Ibid. XIV. xiv. 5.



Antigonus in Jerusalem on the approach of winter, probably B. C. 39, 38. He retires, sacks Jericho, comes to Sepphoris in Galilee in a deep snow, destroys the bands of robbers in Galilee, goes to assist Anthony at Samosata on the Euphrates, and in the interim at *harvest* time his brother Joseph is slain by Antigonus; and Galilee soon after revolts. Herod returns, and after slaughtering many enemies, sits down before Jerusalem; and leaving orders for preparing trenches &c. goes away to celebrate his marriage with Mariamne. This must have been in the winter B. C. 38, 37 \*. Herod returns, and with Sosias and his Roman auxiliaries regularly attacks the place. *Provisions are scarce in the garrison owing to the Sabbatical year.* Jerusalem is taken in the 3rd month on a solemn fast-day, being the anniversary of its capture by Pompey 27 years before (Scaliger suggests 26), Marcus Agrippa and Canidius Gallus Consuls†, B. C. 37.

Divide 37 by 7, and there remains 2.

If the three calculations above stated be correct, every year B. C. divisible by 7 with a remainder 2 is a Sabbatical year, and any Sabbatical year referred to in Scripture, where the difficulties of chronologers are limited to 2 or 3 years, may be fixed to its proper date. Thus the Sabbatical year referred to as a sign by Isaiah‡, must have been B. C. 709. And the year of release pre-

\* Joseph. Antiq. XIV. xv. 14.

† Ibid. xvi. 4.

‡ 2 Kings xix. 29.



ceding the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was\* B. C. 590.

For years A. D. it will be found that the remainder after dividing by 7 must be 6 : consequently A. D. 69, the year before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was a Sabbatical year.

The direct proof of several Sabbatical years from Josephus &c. corresponding with each other may be perhaps illustrated and strengthened by showing that various sieges, with regard to which any scarcity of provisions consequent on a Sabbatical year would naturally have been adverted to, if it were the fact, took place on other years of the Jewish Schemitta or week of years.

Thus the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey B. C. 63, being exactly divisible by 7, implies the 2nd year of a Schemitta, and that by Titus A. D. 70, implies the 1st year.

The return of the Jews on the decree of Cyrus took place late in B. C. 536 ; in time however to prepare the ground and sow seed for the harvest of 535. Had 535 been a Sabbatical year, the ordinary resource of corn springing from the roots or scattered seed of the preceding crop were out of the question, the land having lain desolate. And we hear no mention of famine. But 535 divided by 7 gives a remainder 3, implying the 6th year of a Schemitta.

Our Saviour's disciples plucked the ears of corn as they walked through the corn fields

\* Jeremiah xxxiv. 10.



(διὰ τῶν σπορίμων, *sown corn*) A. D. 28 according to my calculation. 28 divided by 7 leaves no remainder, implying the first year of a Schemitta.

The siege of Samaria by Shalmaneser lasted 3 years (probably current, and more than 2), implying a plentiful stock of provisions ; and commenced in the 4th year of Hezekiah or B. C. 720. Which is divisible by 7 with a remainder 6, marking the 3rd year of a Schemitta, the siege lasting during the 4th and 5th of the same.

The siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar appears to have commenced in the winter of B. C. 589, 588 ; to have been intermitted owing to the approach of the Egyptian army ; to have recommenced in the spring of 587, and then to have continued without intermission to its close in the summer of 586. These years, divided by 7, leave remainders 1, 0, 6, 5 respectively, implying the first, second, third and fourth years of a Schemitta.

N. B. The Sabbatical year 590 thus accords well with the year of release in which the Jews through fear of impending judgment set free their bondservants ; and the year 588 with that in which, trusting that the Babylonians had finally abandoned the siege, they re-enslaved them.

The siege, which led to the death of Jehoiakim and the captivity of Jehoiachin, appears to have taken place in 598, going on by blockade through



the winter to the spring of 597. Now 598 divided by 7 gives a remainder 3, implying the 6th year of a Schemitta. B. C. 597 is thus the Sabbatical year, and this may assist in accounting for Jehoiachin's instant submission, when the season for military operations brought him a peremptory summons.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### ON THE JUBILEES, AND THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL.

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IF the text “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach the acceptable year of the Lord\*” may be considered (as indeed few doubt) to point out the true jubilee, the fulfilment of the typical jubilees of the law, there is at once a high probability that the first year of our Saviour’s public Ministry, to which this declaration belongs, corresponds chronologically with the succession of the preceding jubilees. Now of the keeping of these jubilees by the Israelites there appears no direct evidence, and very little of that of the Sabbatical years. We know indeed that the Sabbatical years of rest to the land had been for the most part unobserved before the Captivity, and may conclude that the jubilees met with a similar neglect. That their succession however was thereby blotted out of the scheme of God’s dispensations to his people is not to be conceived. It has been already seen that from the opportunity of ascertaining the date of 3

\* Luke iv. 18, 19.



Sabbatical years on the authority of Josephus and the 1st Book of Maccabees, their correspondence with each other enables us to count back the whole series with certainty, and to pronounce any year B. C. which is divisible by 7 with a remainder 2 to be a Sabbatical year, and by a necessary consequence by following the calculation into the vulgar Christian era, that any year A. D. which is divisible by 7 with a remainder 6, is also a Sabbatical year. Hence A. D. 27 is a Sabbatical year, and this, as presumed to have been already shewn, is the year in which our Saviour commenced his public ministry, having been baptized the previous autumn.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the 50 years between jubilee and jubilee are complete or current years. It seems to me however, that to reckon 50 full years for the jubilee without regard to the Sabbatical cycles very much disturbs that connexion between them, which the account in Leviticus\* implies; and that Bedford's theory of an intervening year, and a new commencement for the next 7 weeks of years, is wholly inadmissible, for the three ascertained Sabbatical years B. C. 37, B. C. 135, and B. C. 163 are, as before shewn, each divisible by 7 with a remainder 2, a coincidence which must have been wholly destroyed by the intervention of 2 and possibly 3 such years of jubilee, as are here supposed. Besides, if we assume

\* Leviticus xiv.



A. D. 27 as affording a clue to the series, we soon come to a result which negatives the complete 50 years. Tracing the jubilees backward the first is B. C. 24. This of course readily conducts us to B. C. 1424, just 28 years after the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, a point of time obviously too early for the first jubilee, and too late for the commencement of the first seven weeks of years, which terminate in the first jubilee.

On the other supposition the periods of 49 years reckoned backwards fall thus :

|          |     |     |     |      |      |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| B. C. 23 | 268 | 513 | 758 | 1003 | 1248 |
| 72       | 317 | 562 | 807 | 1052 | 1297 |
| 121      | 366 | 611 | 856 | 1101 | 1346 |
| 170      | 415 | 660 | 905 | 1150 | 1395 |
| 219      | 464 | 709 | 954 | 1199 | 1444 |

Now B. C. 1444 is 8 years after the entrance into Canaan, and corresponds remarkably well (as shall be presently shewn) with the time, which appears to have elapsed before all the tribes were quietly settled in their respective portions, and would simultaneously commence the observance of the appointed weeks of years. Moreover it falls in with the Sabbatical year in the 15th year of Hezekiah (B. C. 709) making it the exact middle of the series, and is attended besides with this very striking coincidence, that it is exactly 49 years complete and 50 current from B. C. 1493 the last year of the Egyptian sojourn, and thus forms an appropriate rest at the end of 49 years of wandering and warfare.



Moreover, on the very first of these 49 years were these Sabbatical years and jubilees ordained, as well as a sort of miniature of the same reckoning in the seven weeks terminating in the feast of weeks or day of Pentecost. It is to be observed\* also that the 50 days are reckoned from the morrow after a Sabbath to the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, being therefore quite clearly current only, and but 49 complete, thus illustrating what may seem ambiguous as to the years between jubilee and jubilee.

This coincidence appears to my mind the more satisfactory, because wholly unexpected; the year of the commencement of Christ's Ministry and the year of the Exodus having been both previously settled on quite different evidence, and without any idea that the obscure succession of jubilees could throw any light on them or they on it. Under these circumstances it may be noticed, that supposing an error as to there being a chronological connexion between the commencement of our Lord's Ministry and the completion of the jubilees, the chances are 6 to 1 against the calculation falling on the most suitable year for the beginning of the series, and 48 to one against its falling also on the close of the Egyptian sojourn. Some persons have proposed the *birth* of our Saviour as the closing of the jubilees which, on the 50 years' theory conducts us to the dedication of Solomon's temple, a coin-

\* Leviticus xxiii. 15, 16.



cidence apparently in its favour; but it conducts us also to the year B. C. 1454, which is 2 years before the entrance into Canaan, and is open to another no less fatal objection, viz. that it does not tally with the series of Sabbatical years, whereas, however independently the jubilees might afterwards proceed, they must unquestionably have dated at first from the same beginning as the Sabbatical years; on the other hand, a reckoning by 49 years from our Saviour's birth leads us to B. C. 1475, in the midst of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, or to B. C. 1426, 26 years after the entrance into Canaan, a point of time too far removed from that which the case requires.

The false results then attending the other supposition seem to shew by a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*, that the first idea is the true one, viz. that the jubilees occurred at intervals of 49 years terminating in the first year of our Saviour's Ministry, and moreover that they were identical with, or closely connected with the 7th Sabbatical years; I say, closely connected with, for it seems not wholly impossible that they might be celebrated on the year succeeding, though the loss of two harvests in succession seems an objection, and it is only in the first cycle that we can make good the fiftieth year. It is to be observed too, that the proclamation of the jubilee was to be made in the seventh month, the commencement of the old year *Anno Mundi*, and that some sup-



posing this period to be waited for during 6 months have adopted a sort of compromise between the two opinions. This however seems fanciful and unnecessary, and I think consistency is best preserved by adopting current years for the jubilee, just as in the case of the circumcision on the eighth day, the resurrection on the third day, and that of the day of Pentecost before alluded to. Accordingly I am disposed to agree with Ussher, and (apparently) the Bible Chronology, that the proclamation of the jubilee was made the previous autumn in correspondence with the natural (whatever might be the legal) beginning of the Sabbatical year, in as much as seed time precedes harvest. They have however by a contraction of the reigns of the kings of Judah (unwarranted, as I think, and inconsistent with Ezekiel's period of 390 years) contrived to place the dedication of Solomon's temple on a jubilee. This I cannot accede to, plausible as such a coincidence may at first sight appear, and I even imagine that I see an "a priori" reason against it.

There seem to be two grand chronological successions stamped on God's revealed dispensations, connected severally with the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ. First, the Millenary periods which conduct us from the Creation, to the dedication of Solomon's temple and the birth of Jesus Christ, and pointing on, not improbably, to other grand events at corresponding periods, and



possibly to the final consummation of all things as far as this our terrestrial globe is concerned. Secondly the periods of 7 years apparently commencing with the Mosaic dispensation and pointing through Sabbatical years and jubilees to their grand fulfilment in the Ministry of Jesus Christ, and apparently terminating there. Now there seems no natural connexion between these numbers; it was of course possible for a year of jubilee to fall on the year of the dedication of Solomon's temple, but no multiple of 49 could then fall on the birth of our Saviour, as might naturally be looked for, nor on any other Millenary period before A. M. 8000.

And now, as to the year B. C. 1444 being the most suitable year from which to date the calculation of the Sabbatical years and jubilees. Caleb, when claiming his portion on the first division of the conquered lands, describes himself as 85 years old, and explains that he was 40 years old when sent with others by Moses to spy out the country. This had taken place B. C. 1491, one year after the Exodus; he was therefore 80 years old in B. C. 1451, one year after the entering into Canaan, and 85 in B. C. 1446, 6 years after the entering into Canaan\*. The first division of lands therefore west of Jordan clearly took place in B. C. 1446. But there still remained 7 tribes unprovided for. Joshua assembles the people and remonstrates with them on their being slack

\* Joshua xiv. 6, &c.



to go in and possess the land, which the Lord God of their fathers had given them\*; and three persons from each tribe are sent to go through the land and describe it. This is done, and the portions marked out with much geographical exactness†; next the cities of refuge are appointed‡, and 48 for the Levites§. When they had finally taken possession of their lots, the two tribes and a half who had remained to this time to assist their brethren are dismissed with a blessing to the possessions assigned them by Moses on the other side of Jordan||. These arrangements must have been too much for the year B. C. 1446, and we cannot suppose them quietly settled, and the two tribes and a half returned to their own portions much before the close of B. C. 1445. But there appears no reason for assigning a longer period than this, for there was no remaining resistance on the part of the old inhabitants¶. On this supposition then the year B. C. 1444 being the first year in which all the 12 tribes, being in quiet possession of their lands, could simultaneously commence the full observance of the law, becomes that specific year, which being itself neither a year of jubilee, nor a Sabbatical year, is yet the natural date, from which both these appointments are to be counted. Now this year we have already seen falls in not only with the well ascertained series of Sabbatical

\* Joshua xviii. 3, &amp;c.

† Ibid. xviii, xix.

‡ Ibid. xx.

§ Ibid. xxi.

|| Ibid. xxii.

¶ Ibid. xxi. 44.



years, but, what would be quite beyond probability upon any erroneous theory, with the course of the jubilees reckoned back from their presumed fulfilment in our Saviour's Ministry, and even by going back one step further with the closing year of the Egyptian sojourn.

It has forcibly occurred to me during the consideration of this subject, that the peculiar description of 69 weeks as "7 weeks and 62 weeks," which appears to have never been satisfactorily explained by commentators on the 70 weeks of Daniel, may be readily accounted for, if we view it as an emphatic reference to the great closing jubilee. The 69 weeks being presumed to end at the commencement of our Saviour's ministry, end also, according to the calculation which I have endeavoured to establish, in the grand completion of the series of jubilees. Now the ordinary expression "9 weeks and 60 weeks" would have offered no hint of this important fact, whereas that of "7 weeks and 62 weeks" affords a most intelligible one, and one which the case particularly required. For the whole 70 weeks of the prophecy amounting to the time of 10 inter-jubilee periods, and yet not corresponding with their series, might have entirely withdrawn the attention from their completion at the coming of the Messiah. But the 62 weeks being first reckoned, (which is in fact in accordance with the well understood arrangement of numbers both in Greek and Hebrew,) brings us to the year of the jubilee



B. C. 23, and the series is then closed with regularity by adding the remaining seven weeks of years terminating in the year of jubilee A. D. 27.

It is easy, as elsewhere explained, to add the one remaining week of years, during which the covenant was confirmed with many, and in the exact midst of which our Saviour caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease by the final sacrifice of himself.

I am much inclined therefore to conclude, that the destruction of Jerusalem and the wars and desolations, which have led commentators to the hopeless labour of fitting them to the 70 weeks, though foretold, were not *Chronologically* foretold by Daniel, any more than the building of the wall in troublous times; and that this simple view of the scope of this celebrated prophecy is not the less satisfactory, or the less likely to be correct, because of its simplicity.

I will here repeat however, what I have stated elsewhere\*, that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was *chronologically* foretold by Ezekiel by the 40 days during which he lay on his side for Judah's trespass; for what was Judah's great trespass, if not that awful crime, which preceded by exactly 40 years the passover at which the assembled nation was finally hemmed in for destruction by the army of Titus?

\* Chap. xi. p. 258.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE ARRANGEMENT OF EZEKIEL'S 390 YEARS.

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THE destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar having taken place in B. C. 586, Ezekiel's prophetic period of 390 years from Israel's trespass carries us back to B. C. 976 for the revolt of Israel under Jeroboam. Those, who count the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel without regard to these limits, seldom differ more than a few years from the same amount, while the intricacy of the accounts, the impossibility of distinguishing in all cases complete years from current ones, and here and there an undeniable inaccuracy in the text, always tend to varying and unsatisfactory results. It is therefore the more wonderful, that chronologers should have remained unconvinced, that this period, like others already noticed, has been really measured for us. If it has not, what becomes of Sacred Chronology, as a system on which we may confidently rely? It only remains to be shewn that, according to the system of reckoning already ascertained in a few cases, the whole series of



reigns from Rehoboam to Zedekiah are fairly reducible to this exact limit.

In order to simplify the investigation, I shall divide the whole period into 4 portions; the first reaching to the contemporary deaths of Ahaziah of Judah and Joram of Israel; the second to the end of the 26th year of Uzziah corresponding with the death of Jeroboam II, at which period the continued parallelism of the reigns of Judah and Israel ceases; the third to the year of the capture of Samaria by Shalmaneser; and the fourth to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. These periods are selected chiefly for the sake of the ascertained seasons of the year, at which they begin and end respectively; for it will follow from this arrangement, that all doubts respecting the time included in each period will lie between whole years of addition or subtraction, and be consequently far more open to a consistent and probable decision, than if mere fragments of years were the matter in debate. Unimportant differences between the round numbers and the actual reigns will be either marked by + or -, or remain unnoticed; and the first year of each reign will be placed opposite the two years of the contemporary reign with which it more or less corresponds, in order to facilitate the adjustment.

In the first period it will be seen, that the round number of years assigned to the kings of Judah amounts to 95, and of those of the kings



of Israel to 98; and that several instances of joint sovereignty on the side of Israel must be supposed in order to complete the adjustment, because the reigns of Judah can supply no redundancy. The 17 years of Rehoboam, and the 3 of Abijam, even fall a little short of the first 20 of Jeroboam, and the chance of finding a redundant year between Asa and Jehoshaphat is negatived by observing that Asa, having begun his actual reign a little before his nominal first year, could not have exceeded his 41st year (ending of course at Nisan) so far as to leave such a remnant before the next Nisan, as might be merged in reckoning the first of Jehoshaphat.

Assuming therefore Nisan B.C. 976 as the commencement of our series, (for the traditional fast of the Jews shews that the revolt had reached the consummation of the golden calves by 23 Sivan, about midsummer,) we must leave the reigns unaltered in amount to Jehoshaphat inclusive. Jeroboam with Nadab, and Elah with Baasha can only be adjusted by supposing joint sovereignties as below. But Omri's 12 years may stand as about 11 years and 8 or 9 months, if he may be considered as occupying nearly the whole of Asa 27—38. Henceforward difficulties begin on both sides: Jehoram of Judah reigns some unstated time with his father Jehoshaphat, which can only be counted by comparison with Joram of Israel, whose adjustment with Jehoshaphat is perplexed and contradictory.



## FIRST PERIOD. B. C. 976-883, Autumn.

| Years<br>B. C. | Correct<br>reign.                   | Reign<br>in round<br>numbers. | JUDAH.                   | ISRAEL.            | Reign<br>in round<br>numbers. | Correct<br>reign. |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 976            | 17 + ..                             | 17                            | Rehoboam. 1              | 1. Jeroboam        | 22                            | $22\frac{1}{3}$   |
| 959            | 3 - ..                              | 3                             | Abijam.... 1             | { 18<br>19.....    | ..                            |                   |
| 956            | 41....                              | 41                            | Asa..... 1               | { 20<br>21.....    | ..                            |                   |
| 954            | .....                               | .....                         | ..... 2 }<br>..... 3 }   | 1 Nadab....        | 2                             |                   |
| 953            | .....                               | .....                         | ..... 3 }<br>..... 4 }   | 1 Baasha...        | 24                            | 24                |
| 930            | .....                               | .....                         | ..... 26 }<br>..... 27 } | 1 Elah.....        | 2                             |                   |
| 929            | .....                               | .....                         | ..... 27 }<br>..... 28 } | 1 Omri.....        | 12                            |                   |
| 918            | .....                               | .....                         | ..... 38 }<br>..... 39 } | 1 Ahab.....        | 22                            | $21\frac{2}{3}$   |
| 915            | 25....                              | 25                            | Jehoshaphat 1            | { 4.....<br>5..... | ..                            | ..                |
| 895            | .....                               | .....                         | ..... 19 }<br>..... 20 } | 1 Ahaziah ..       | 2                             | $1\frac{2}{3}$    |
| 894            | .....                               | .....                         | ..... 21 }<br>..... 22 } | 1 Joram....        | 12                            | $12\frac{1}{3}$   |
| 890            | { 1 joint<br>6 $\frac{2}{3}$ sole } | 8                             | Jehoram.. 1              | 5.....             | ..                            | ..                |
| 883            | 1.....                              | 1                             | Ahaziah .. 1             | 12.....            | ..                            | ..                |
|                | $93\frac{2}{3}$                     | 95                            |                          |                    | 98                            | $93\frac{2}{3}$   |

The case of Joram of Israel deserves particular attention as illustrating the rules already laid down, and enabling us also to ascertain satisfactorily the *season of the year* at which he and Ahaziah were slain, and Jehu and Athaliah succeeded. His reign is stated at 12 years\*: but Jehoram of Judah began to reign in his 5th†: and reigned 8 years, being also succeeded by Ahaziah who reigned 1‡ year. Thus 9 years (in round numbers) are to be included in less than 8 years (in round

\* 2 Kings iii. 1.

† Ibid. viii. 16.

‡ Ibid. 26.



numbers): consequently Joram must have survived the 12 years (as ending in a Nisan) several months, and most probably to the autumnal season at least, about which there is no difficulty, if we suppose him (as the case indeed requires) to have succeeded to the throne about the summer season, thus having perhaps 9 months more or less for his nominal first year. He might even have lived on as far as November without raising the sum total of his reign to above 12 years and 4 or 5 months; and this, if we refer to the reigns of Jehu and Athaliah in the next period, we shall find reason to suppose that he did. This adjustment of Joram's reign derives additional confirmation from two apparently contradictory texts which may thus be reconciled. Ahaziah of Judah is stated to have begun to reign in the 12th year of Joram of Israel\*, and again in his 11th†. He can scarcely have reigned a full year, and so may very properly be considered to have commenced in Joram's 12th or last year. But as his reign must have begun in the winter, the intervention of Nisan, the regular division of the Jewish year, by another mode of reckoning throws it back into the 11th. For a very similar reason it will be remembered, that the same year of Jehoiakim is by Daniel called his 3rd and by Jeremiah his 4th ‡.

\* 2 Kings viii. 25.

† Ibid. ix. 29.

‡ See ch. viii. p. 140.



Having thus ascertained that Joram's reign commenced in the summer season, we shall be the better prepared for perceiving the impossibility of reconciling the two following statements of the Book of Kings, viz. that Joram began to reign over Israel in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat \*, and that Ahab began to reign in the 38th of Asa †, (which will leave barely 21 years for Ahab's 22, and Ahaziah's 2) even by pressing Ahab for joint sovereignty on Omri, as well as Ahaziah on Ahab. Both these joint sovereignties seem improbable, for Omri's reign is short, and Ahab was young enough to go to war in person, not a word being said of his son's aid ‡. As consistency is impossible without supposing an error § somewhere, I should say that probable conjecture would find it in the statements, that Ahaziah began to reign in the 17th of Jehoshaphat ||, and Joram in the 18th ¶. The means of adjustment with Jehoshaphat being thus questionable, the only remaining guide for fixing the commencement of the reign of Joram of Israel is the length of the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah. We have already seen that Joram's reign began about the summer season ;

\* 2 Kings iii. 1.

† 1 Kings xvi. 29.

‡ Ibid. xxii.

§ The statement in 2 Kings i. 17, that Joram of Israel began to reign in the 2nd year of Jehoram of Judah, is likewise inconsistent with the other notices of Scripture of these reigns, but may perhaps refer to some other supposed commencement of Jehoram's joint sovereignty with his father Jehoshaphat.

|| 1 Kings xxii. 51.

¶ 2 Kings iii. 1.



and Ahab's pretty clearly commenced not long before Nisan, as it could not fall far back into Asa's 38th without reducing Omri's 12 years too low. The round numbers therefore of Ahab and Ahaziah must allow for 6 months or more of excess or defect between them; and, as has been seen, I have adopted the former alternative, and supposed Ahab to have reigned from near the end of Asa's 38th to about the autumn of Jehoshaphat's 19th, i. e.  $21\frac{2}{3}$  years, and Ahaziah to the summer of Jehoshaphat's 21st, i. e.  $1\frac{2}{3}$  year. Thus Joram of Israel begins in the summer of Jehoshaphat's 21st, and Jehoram of Judah *quite early* in the 5th of Joram of Israel, that is in the 25th of Jehoshaphat, thus reigning with his father about a year. Here then we find reason for setting the reigns of Ahab and Ahaziah below their round numbers rather than above them; for suppose the other alternative adopted, and we shall find the year thus added (for it must be a full year) inconsistent with the fact of Jehoram of Judah reigning in the lifetime of Jehoshaphat\*.

\* 2 Kings viii. 16.



## SECOND PERIOD. B. C. 883 autumn—781 spring.

| Years B. C. | Correct reign.   | Reign in round numbers. | JUDAH.     | ISRAEL.    | Reign in round numbers. | Correct reign.   |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 883 autumn  | $6\frac{1}{3}$   | 6                       | Athaliah 1 | 1 Jehu     | 28                      | $28\frac{1}{3}$  |
| .....       | .....            | .....                   | ..... 6    | 6.....     | .....                   | .....            |
| 876 spring  | 40               | 40                      | Joash 1    | 7.....     | .....                   | .....            |
| .....       | .....            | .....                   | ..... 23   | 1 Jehoahaz | 17                      | $16\frac{2}{3}$  |
| .....       | .....            | .....                   | ..... 39   | 1 Joash    | 16                      | $15\frac{2}{3}$  |
| .....       | .....            | .....                   | ..... 40 } | { 2        | .....                   | .....            |
| 836 spring  | 29               | 29                      | Amaziah 1  | { 3        | .....                   | .....            |
| .....       | .....            | .....                   | ..... 15   | 1 Jeroboam | 41                      | $40\frac{2}{3}$  |
| 807 spring  | 26               | 26                      | Uzziah.. 1 | 16.....    | .....                   | .....            |
| 781 spring  | .....            | .....                   | ..... 26   | 41.....    | .....                   | .....            |
|             | $101\frac{1}{3}$ | 101                     |            |            | 102                     | $101\frac{1}{3}$ |

In this period I have given Jehu  $28\frac{1}{3}$  years, viz.  $6\frac{1}{3}$  with Athaliah and 22 full years with Joash; for the deaths of Joram and Ahaziah having happened towards the close of B. C. 883, and Jehu's year being calculated from the following Nisan without reckoning these previous months, "1 Joash" must nearly coincide with "7 Jehu."

In the case of Jehoahaz it would require the years "23—39 Joash" inclusive to make up the round number of 17 full years for his reign. But "23 Joash" may be presumed on within a fraction for its commencement, lest Jehu should exceed  $28\frac{1}{2}$  years; and the greater part of "39 Joash" will then make  $16\frac{2}{3}$  for its sum total. If nearly the whole of "39 Joash" is included in Jehoahaz, the 16 years of Joash of Israel must also suffer in completeness unless the 40 years of Joash of Judah are raised to meet them. It certainly is a



question, whether the years of two or three reigns of Judah are to be raised to accommodate those of Israel, or those of Israel reduced to accommodate those of Judah ; the difference in question being one whole year. As however Jehoahaz is clearly defective whatever may be the case with his two successors, and as Uzziah can contribute little or nothing towards raising the balance on the side of Judah, since he is (as will appear from the scheme of the next period) clearly redundant after his 52nd year, I prefer dropping the time on the Israelite side as the more probable but not *absolutely necessary* alternative.

The puzzling text, which dates Uzziah's reign from the 27th of Jeroboam\*, cannot be accounted for except as referring to a joint sovereignty of unknown commencement, and prevents satisfactory adjustment to the end of this period. Taking however the numbers as we find them Amaziah's 29 years include at least 14 with Joash of Israel †, and about 15 years, during which he survives him‡, and Jeroboam's 41 years (dropping 4 months at the commencement) may be supposed to finish with the 26 first of Uzziah. But whether they do so accurately or not is unimportant, for Jeroboam has no immediate successor, and Uzziah's 26th of necessity ends exactly with the first of Nisan, and becomes the true termination of this period.

\* 2 Kings xv. 1, 2.

† Ibid. xiv. 23.

‡ Ibid. 17 ; 2 Chron. xxv. 25.



## THIRD PERIOD. B. C. 781, spring—717. Feb. or March.

| Years B. C.     | Correct reign.  | Reign in round numbers. | JUDAH.         | ISRAEL.         | Reign in round numbers. | Correct reign.    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 781, spring     | 26 +            | 26                      | Uzziah 27      |                 |                         |                   |
|                 |                 |                         | — 38 }<br>39 } | Zechariah       | $\frac{1}{2}$           | $\frac{1}{2}$     |
|                 |                 |                         | — 39 }<br>40 } | 1 Menahem       | 10                      | $10\frac{1}{2}$ — |
|                 |                 |                         | — 50 }<br>51 } | 1 Pekahiah      | 2                       | $1\frac{1}{2}$ +  |
|                 |                 |                         | — 52           | 1 Pekah         | 20                      |                   |
| 755, summer     | 16 —            | 16                      | Jotham 1       | { 2 —<br>3 —    |                         |                   |
| 739, spring     | $15\frac{2}{3}$ | 16                      | Ahaz 1         | { 17 —<br>18 —  |                         |                   |
|                 |                 |                         | — 12 }<br>13 } | 1 Hoshea        | 9                       | $8\frac{2}{3}$    |
| 724, end of yr. | $6\frac{1}{3}$  | 6                       | Hezekiah 1     | { 3 —<br>4 —    |                         |                   |
| 717, March      |                 |                         | — 6            | 9 Samaria taken |                         |                   |
|                 | 64 nearly       | 64                      |                |                 |                         |                   |

In this period the parallelism is incomplete.

## FOURTH PERIOD. B. C. 717. March—586.

717. Samaria taken a little before Nisan.  
 710. Sennacherib's invasion, Hezekiah's sickness, summer.  
 695. Death of Hezekiah, Manasseh succeeds; summer.  
 640. Accession of Amon; Jan. or Feb.  
 639. Accession of Josiah; Aug. or Sept.  
 608. Death of Josiah; spring.  
     Jehoahaz reigns 3 months.  
     Accession of Jehoiakim; summer.  
 605. Nebuchadnezzar's invasion. First year of the captivity, viz. 4th  
     year of Jehoiakim by regular reckoning from Nisan, but, up to  
     the summer, only his 3rd from accession.  
 604. Nebuchadnezzar's first of actual reign.



597. Death of Jehoiakim; Jan. or Feb.  
Jehoiachin's 3 months.  
Zedekiah's accession; April or May.  
8th of Nebuchadnezzar.
590. Sabbatical year in which the bondslaves are released through fear of approaching invasion.
589. Dec. or Jan. viz., 9th day of 10th month of 9th year of Zedekiah.  
Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to Jerusalem (2 Kings xxv. 1.)
588. Chaldeans retire through fear of Egyptians.
586. Jerusalem taken 9th day of 4th month.

I think it quite impossible for any one, who carefully reads 2 Kings xviii. and the two following chapters together with the parallel accounts in 2 Chronicles and Isaiah, having no preconceived chronological scheme in view, to which he is desirous of bending the plain course of events, to avoid supposing that Sennacherib's invasion, the destruction of his army, and the sickness of Hezekiah, all happened in the same year, the 14th of Hezekiah. Sennacherib begins by attacking the fenced cities of Judah, and having taken several is besieging Lachish, when Hezekiah endeavours to appease him by a heavy tribute: the treacherous king accepts the offering, but perseveres in his hostility: Hezekiah also takes active measures for the defence of Jerusalem\*: Sennacherib still at Lachish sends Rabshakeh and others with a strong force and insulting messages to intimidate the Jews into submission, but Hezekiah's religious firmness and the direct assurance of God through the prophet

\* 2 Chron. xxxii. 2-8.



Isaiah defeat his purpose, and Rabshakeh on his return finds Sennacherib merely removed from Lachish, which he had probably taken, to Libnah. While "warring against Libnah" Sennacherib hears the rumour, foretold by the prophet, that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia is advancing against him, and while preparing to resist this new enemy sends another threatening message to Hezekiah, who thereupon prays to God, and receives fresh assurances of deliverance; and the predicted\* blast, the destruction of Sennacherib's army, immediately follows. Hezekiah's sickness appears to have happened about the same time with these events: "in those days" is the expression in all three authorities; and the fact of its being mentioned after them in all three leads us to the natural conclusion that it was a little later in the year. One or two other considerations seem to favour this supposition. The promise of lengthened days to Hezekiah is accompanied by the assurance of deliverance from the king of Assyria. Now had this assurance been given previously to the invasion, Hezekiah would have scarcely been so far alarmed as to endeavour to buy off Sennacherib by the treasures of the temple; though it was naturally a source of comfort to him to be afterwards assured that for the rest of his days no danger was to be apprehended from the formidable power of the Assyrian monarchy. Again he is said to have reigned 29 years; and the

\* Isaiah xxxvii. 36.



attack of the Assyrians being in his 14th year must have happened (reckoning the years as usual from Nisan) when he had reigned but 13 years and 4 or 5 months at the utmost, so that the promised 15 years added to his previous reign could not well (even with all due allowance for a current year instead of a complete one) make up the sum, if his sickness preceded the invasion or even the final deliverance from the Assyrian army.

In spite of this seemingly plain statement many Chronologers\*, and those most held in esteem, Ussher, Prideaux, Lloyd, &c., have placed Hezekiah's sickness and the siege of Lachish 3 years earlier than the siege of Libnah and the destruction of the Assyrian army. They appear to have found themselves in straits in consequence of adopting the year B. C. 588 for the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; for admitting, as they appear to do, that the destruction of the Assyrians happened in the year before a Sabbatical year†, and that this Sabbatical year according to their ascertained succession could not well be any other than B. C. 709, they must of course have perceived that Hezekiah's 15 years together with the years assigned to his successors could not by any possible reduction for current and incomplete years be included between B. C. 710 and 588.

\* Petavius considers these events as in one year, and the sickness last.

† Isaiah xxxvii. 30.



It may be that the three years' expedition to Egypt which has been so generally attributed to Sennacherib, properly belongs to the reign of Esarhaddon, and the period of Manasseh's captivity. Sargon, spoken of by Isaiah\* as sending Tartan to Ashdod, and desolating Egypt and Ethiopia for 3 years, though generally considered to be Sennacherib, may perhaps be Esarhaddon, called in Tobit† Sarchedon, to which the name bears a strong resemblance, whereas it bears none whatever to Sennacherib. The name Tartan leads the guess to Sennacherib; but Tartan, like Rabshakeh, is understood to designate the holder of an office, viz. that of President of the Customs, not an individual. It must be owned however, that in order to identify Sargon with Sarchedon or Esarhaddon, the 20th chapter of Isaiah must be wholly prophetic, as Isaiah cannot well be supposed to have lived on to the period of Manasseh's captivity, and the capture of Ashdod is spoken of as if *already effected*, though the three years' captivity seems future and *need not be immediate*. On the whole, if Sennacherib was really 3 years from home on this expedition, he must have begun with Egypt, and ended with Judæa; and his exploits in Egypt must have been more like pillage than conquest, as he had not even succeeded in taking Pelusium‡. In his boastful letter to Hezekiah he does not include Egypt among the Assyrian conquests, and Isaiah's de-

\* Isaiah xx. 1.

† Tobit i. 21.

‡ Herod. II. 141.



scription of the captives \* seems rather too much for Sennacherib's successes. However the doubts here suggested need not affect Sacred Chronology. It need only be remarked that Sennacherib's attack on Egypt, whether of 3 years or only as many months, preceded that on Judæa.

\* Isaiah xx. 4.







## A P P E N D I X.

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### DATES OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES\*.

THE Dates of St. Paul's Epistles form a natural supplement to the Chronology of the Acts of the Apostles, and a cursory view of them as assigned by different chronologers presents an almost endless variety of opinion. Nevertheless in one respect this variety is not so great as might at first sight be imagined, as it is for the most part the mere accompaniment of their varying views of the Historical Chronology ; and excepting three Epistles, on the dates of which opinions differ widely, the remaining eleven are very easily, and indeed with pretty general unanimity, placed in their due connexion with St. Paul's history.

It will not be doubted that the following six were written before St. Paul's long imprisonment at Cæsarea and Rome ; that to the Galatians alone affording any scope for discussion on the subject of time and place :

1. 1 Thessalonians
2. 2 Thessalonians
3. Galatians
4. 1 Corinthians
5. 2 Corinthians
6. Romans.

\* See Preface, p. v.



Internal evidence makes it quite clear that the following four were written while he was a prisoner at Rome :

1. Philippians\*.
2. Ephesians†.
3. Colossians‡.
4. Philemon§.

There remain the four following :

1. Hebrews ||.
2. Titus¶.
3. 1 Timothy\*\*.
4. 2 Timothy††.

\* Epaphroditus the bearer of this Epistle had brought contributions to St. Paul from Philippi, had since been sick at Rome, but was now recovered. Philipp. ii. 25-28.

St. Paul trusts to come shortly himself, but still earlier upon learning the issue of his trial to despatch Timothy to them. ii. 19-24.

St. Paul is *very* confident of seeing them again. i. 25, 26.

See also iv. 15, 16, 18, 22.

† See Ephesians iii. 1; vi. 21, 22.

‡ See Colossians i. 1, 7, 8; ii. 1; iv. 7, 9-18.

§ See Philemon 1-3, 22, 23.

|| They of Italy salute you. Heb. xiii. 24.

Know that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom if he come shortly I will see you. xiii. 23.

Ye had compassion on me in my bonds, &c. x. 34.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood. xii. 4.

See also xiii. 18, 19.

¶ *When I shall send Artemas unto thee or Tychicus*, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos, &c. Titus iii. 12, 13.

See i. 5.

\*\* 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. Some concerning faith have made shipwreck, of whom is Hymenæus, &c. (Hymenæus is spoken of again 2 Tim. ii. 17.) iii. 14. *hoping to come unto thee shortly*, but if I *tarry long* &c. See also i. 3; iv. 12, 13.

†† See 2 Tim. i. 4; *of me his prisoner*, &c. 8; 15-18; iv. 6, 9-13, 16, 17, 19-21.



The Epistle to the Hebrews is here reckoned among those of St. Paul, because the arguments for doing so appear to preponderate, and because moreover, whichever way the question of its genuineness might be settled, its supposed date would scarcely be affected.

The second Epistle to Timothy obviously belongs to the close of St. Paul's Apostolical labours. I have placed between these, the Epistle to Titus and the first Epistle to Timothy; and here a numerous body of modern chronologers are against me; but I think that nothing could have led them to encounter the palpable contradiction to the narrative of the Acts, which their earlier date for these epistles will be found to involve, but that original error in their chronological scheme, which brings St. Paul to Rome at so late a period, as for his two years' confinement there to trench closely on the probable time of his martyrdom, and even to have led some to doubt (in defiance of the unvarying verdict of ancient tradition) whether he was ever confined at Rome more than once.

St. Paul, as late as in his second Epistle to the Corinthians written but a very few months, and those winter months, before he left Greece for that visit to Jerusalem which issued in his 5 years' captivity, describes himself as having the care of all the churches, which seems to imply that he could not at this time have made those precise arrangements with Timothy and Titus, which his Epistles to them indicate, and which made them in fact no less than his regular episcopal successors in the dioceses of Ephesus and Crete.



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St Paul, as late as in his second Epistle to the Corinthians writes that a very few months, and those almost months, before he left Greece, he had sent so lamentable a letter in his 5 years' apostolic journey, which he had been the care of all the churches, which seems to imply that he could not at the time have been so far from home as to have written with Timothy and Titus, which the Epistles to them indicate, and which must have been written before the regular epistolary intercourse was commenced between him and them.



















Faussett, Godfrey

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